

## **The Present Crisis of Faith**

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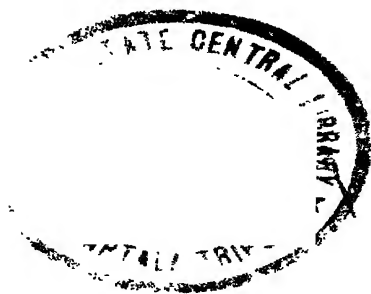
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# **The Present Crisis of Faith**

**S. Radhakrishnan**



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*The Present  
Crisis of Faith*



## **The Present Crisis of Faith**

**I**T is a truism to say that mankind is today in the midst of one of the greatest crises in history. Our predicament is due to the lack of adjustment of the human spirit to the startling developments in science and technology. In spite of the fact that the great scientific inventions have liberated us from servitude to nature, we seem to suffer from a type of neurosis, from cultural disintegration. Science has relieved us of grinding poverty, mitigated the tortures of physical pain. Yet we suffer from an inward loneliness. All growth is marked by pain. All transition belongs to the realm of tragedy. The transition that we have to effect today, if we are to survive, is a moral and spiritual revolution which should embrace the whole world.

We have had other revolutions in human history, when we discovered how to make a fire, when we invented the wheel, when we applied steam, when we discovered electricity. These are reduced to insignificant proportions compared with the present revolution brought about by the development of nuclear energy. The discovery of nuclear energy presents not only great possibilities of human progress but also the risk of immediate and utter destruction. It can move mountains, dig tunnels, build harbours,

increase food production, bridge the gap between the well-fed and hungry peoples of the world and remove some of the major causes which hitherto led to wars; or it can bring death and destruction to the peoples of the world. Modern science enlarges the power of man to do evil as well as to resist evil. Humanity today faces the challenge of destiny. We can meet the challenge and build an international order which allows freedom of development of all the constituent States under a rule of law which is enforceable by a world authority, or the great power which we wield may destroy us in the duel between the two armed groups led by two great Powers.

The root cause of the cold war is fear and hatred of each other and not greed for possessions. So long as it continues, a war may result through a navigational error, a wrong image on a radar screen, a tired pilot, a sick officer or any other accident. There is conflict today between the goal of humanity as a family of nations, co-operating with each other in peace and freedom and the present system which gave us global wars, universal advance into the machine society and militant materialism. The future requires a radical change in our attitude to international relations. While we recognize the need for giving up the military approach to the settlement of international disputes, for subordinating our national loyalties to the good of humanity, our political leaders are continuing the old intrigues and threats, bargaining and manoeuvres as if the old weapons of bows and arrows, guns and grenades would prevail.

Power politics which has been the guiding princi-

ple of the traditional system of inter-governmental relations still survives though disguised in different ways. The logical outcome of power politics in the nuclear age will be not world supremacy but universal genocide. An all-out nuclear war would mean victory not for any nation or group of nations but for death and darkness. Even if there is no war, the tests themselves are disastrous to human welfare. Our misdeeds will blast their whole future. We must recognize that we have reached the end of the military road. When Calvin burned Servetus, Costello observed: 'Burning a man is not defence of Faith, but the murder of a man.' To burn men, women and children by atom bombs is not the defence of a nation but murder of men, women and children. We are devising weapons for our defence against the enemies around us but the enemy is within us.

Nationalism is still a powerful force. After a world war of shattering dimensions the League of Nations was created. When the guns again began to roar the League collapsed. When victory came after the Second World War, the Charter of the United Nations was signed. It has not yet become a living reality. National rivalries persist even in U.N. meetings. While it strives to build a free and peaceful world-community, with a body of doctrines and a scheme of values which will engage the interests and energies of humanity as a whole, its work is hampered by conflicting power-groups. 'Our country, right or wrong' has been a sufficient guide to countless millions of people across the centuries. Those who see the work of the United Nations Organization and the powerful hold of nationalist

fervour and the armaments race are profoundly disillusioned and feel that our civilization is on edge. They hold that there is nothing extraordinary in the thought that our civilization with all its wonderful achievements in arts and science, literature and philosophy may vanish in the same way in which many other civilizations in the past have perished. The Stoic doctrine of *ecpyrosis* teaches that the world be destroyed by fire, the slate wiped clean and a new start made. Many leading theologians remind us of Scriptural statements about the end of the world and tell us that it may well be within the will of Providence that the human race should pass out.

Unfortunately those who are scientifically-minded are prone to talk about the inevitability of human affairs. We are led to believe that the pressure of economic and political forces drives the world towards a catastrophe as relentless Fate does in a Greek tragedy. The course of history is a chain of causes and effects with which man is inextricably involved. Man is totally at the mercy of history. Man's hopes, fears and expectations have no bearing on the future. We are said to be in the grip of forces stronger than ourselves. In great affairs, we are told, there is more in the minds of events than in the minds of the actors. Mass hysteria plays havoc with the lives of millions. The new wave of naturalism does not inspire human beings with courage and initiative.

Theological determinism robs the individual of his significance. God leads the cosmic process to its goal through His plan. The last pages of a book are already contained in the first pages.

If there are prophets of doom there are also prophets of hope, though they build hope on the abyss of despair. They ask us to search our consciences and find out our moral responsibilities in this nuclear age. Poets, philosophers and prophets have a compelling vision of the unity of man and perpetual peace. Even political leaders have testified to it. Tom Paine declared, 'My country is the world.'

The dilemma of the modern man is that though he despairs of life, he does not wish to die. The instinct for survival gives us hope. The enemy we have to fight is not capitalism or communism. It is our folly, our spiritual blindness, our love of power, our lust for domination. A gloomy anthropologist said in 1945 that putting a weapon like the atom bomb into the hands of an ape is guaranteeing the destruction of civilization. If we do not adjust ourselves to the incredible reality of the nuclear age, if we do not revise our old habits, if we do not recast our institutions, we will pass out.

We know that we should work for a new pattern of international relations but the power and pull of the traditional ways of life make us halting in our endeavours. We must be jolted out of our dogmatic slumbers if the future is to be saved. There is a conflict between ancient traditions and the emerging new ethos. All life is a perpetual conflict between the old and the new. The hero is the champion not of things become but of things becoming. The dragon to be slain is the monster of the *status quo*. The enemy is in the seat of power: he is the tyrant who uses to his own advantage his power and authority.

There are many roads to mass suicide but only

one way to human survival. It is the road of faith which inspires us with the strong hope of things to come. There is no crass causality in human affairs.

The conflict is between conscious purpose and unconscious impulse. Man is a compound of baseness and nobility, of intelligence and folly. We have to be saved from ourselves, from the infirmity, from the corruption in our own nature. The world is the home of the fallen man where reason should rule but actually unreason does. 'Neither was there any beast with me save the beast that I rode upon.'<sup>1</sup> By our effort we can resolve the conflict in us, diminish in our lives hateful emotions and increase love and fellow-feeling. We must fight in solitude the demons which oppose our progress, the demons of our own making. The need for a new accession of moral energy which will help to mould society into a new shape is desperate.

The discipline which helps us to change ourselves is religion. Shallow rationalism may suggest that, by taking thought we may rid the world of its evils, remove the injustices and tragedies of common life. Only a moral and spiritual revolution in the name of human dignity can place man above the idols of economic production, technological organization, racial discrimination and national egotism.

Religion is not irrelevant to life. It has some guidance and help to offer to a generation which is perplexed at its failure to find satisfaction and is now groping for light. Only a living faith in God will

<sup>1</sup> Nehemiah 11, 12.

enable man to overcome the paralysing sense of despair and create a less imperfect society.

The hold of religion on people's minds is, however, on the wane. The *Time* magazine reported a survey made among 2,000 young people between 18 and 29 years of age. Of the 19 per cent who said that 'they believed in the Bible,' 77 per cent confessed that they never read it. What is true of the United States is more or less true of the peoples of other nations.

Under the influence of science and technology which are becoming universal, religion is being transformed into a messianic materialism. Even those who do not adopt this creed do not feel the need for any religion. The vast unknown which held the mystery of God is becoming the known. As our dependence on nature is diminishing, our need for faith is growing less. Besides, the infallible dogma and doctrines fetter men's minds and impede the religious quest.

The new social order stresses different social needs. Whatever religions may profess, they have condoned and even perpetrated all conceivable crimes. Religious life and moral injustice cannot go together.

The exclusive, intolerant character of religion results in persecution and heresy-hunting and religious wars. It lets loose malice, hatred and uncharitableness among the followers of different religions. There is no need to kill one another about differences in the way of comprehending that which surpasses them.

The main causes of the decline of religious belief

are traceable to the spirit of scepticism fostered by science, condemnation of religious attitudes in regard to social problems and the exclusive, intolerant character of religion which militates against the emerging world unity. Religion must either ground itself on firmer foundations or else admit its inadequacy in the face of the deepest and greatest human need of the day. We cannot be content with psychologies of dread and anxiety or philosophies of despair and non-existence. Religions need to be rid of their irrationality, reactionary social character and of provincialism.

It is not possible for many people to accept beliefs that are not reasonable. It is only in a spirit of free inquiry that scientific thought progressed. This very spirit of free inquiry saps the foundations of supernatural dogmatic religions. It has made faith unnatural to the millions of people to whose ancestors it was once natural. Passive faith has given place to critical questioning.

Under the influence of science a doctrine of Positivism has grown up which dismisses philosophy and religion as meaningless. Logical positivism holds that a proposition is meaningful only if it can be verified. The question whether God exists cannot be verified by observation. The very principle of verification is far from self-evident. It is, indeed, self-contradictory for there is no means by which it can itself be observationally verified.

We have philosophy whenever men become conscious of their existence through reflection. Every one of us has a right or a wrong philosophy. Wherever standards of value or canons of criticism are

applied there is philosophy. Even those who treat philosophy as superfluous or irrelevant do so as the result of philosophizing.

When people attempt to frame a philosophical interpretation of the world, they are attracted by materialism. In the early days, Bertrand Russell tells us, the late Professor G.E. Moore wrote a paper which began : 'In the beginning was matter and matter begat the Devil and the Devil begat God.' After an outline of cosmic history the paper ended, 'And God died and next the Devil died and matter remained.' 'Whirl is King, having driven out Zeus.'

A scientific study of the cosmic process reveals to us a mystery at the heart of the universe. The men associated with the Royal Society in its early days believed that 'the Heavens declare the glory of God'. John Beale wrote of 'the lawful and religious delight which should result from beholding the curious and wonderful frame of this our visible world'. For Isaac Newton space was the *sansorium dei*.

'The wonderful contrivances' of the great Creator held Oldenberg in awe. The great naturalist John Ray gave his book the title "The Wisdom of God manifested in the Works of the Creation."

Faith must be related to reason. There can be no conflict between reason and religion. Faith in contrast to superstition cannot be irrational. Nor is reason wholly devoid of faith. Science, philosophy and religion, all attempt to reveal the truth which is ultimately one and all-inclusive. We cannot have different truths covering the same ground. Religion is the name for man's total conscious attitude toward life as it is found and enlightened by rational

awareness and knowledge. The data of faith must have affinity with the natural knowledge which man has of himself and the world. The religious view requires to be harmonized with the picture of the world and of man which modern science gives us today. 'I am the mover of the tree,' the Upanisad says, *aham vṛkṣasya rerivā*.

All great scientific achievements are the work of the living spirit in man. The cosmic mystery is also the inmost being of man. The free human individual has a social side to him but so long as he remains a human being, there is a certain innocence at the heart of his being which defies all analysis. It is the subjective in us which makes us capable of individual freedom and responsibility. We must reassert our ultimate power to redeem ourselves. We are not completely the victims of necessity. Kant's doctrine of transcendental freedom affirms a wholly free (noumenal) self located in a realm transcending the causally connected phenomena projected by the knowing mind. If we realize that we are not simply objects but subjects also, every day gives us a new chance, heralds a new life, even a new order or society.

God is not only transcendent to the world but is immanent in it. One of Kabir's songs represents God as saying:

*O servant, where dost thou seek me ?*

*I am beside thee.*

*I am neither in temple nor in mosque,*

*I am neither in rites and ceremonies.*

*If thou art a true seeker,*

*Thou shalt at once see me.*

**Kabir says : ‘God is the breath of all breath.’**

We must use our reason to fight the superstitious beliefs and practices which have crept into religion. We can believe only in a just God, who is impartial to the saint and the sinner even as the sun shines on those who shiver in cold or sweat in heat. God is not angered by neglect or placated by prayers. The wheels of His chariot turn unimpeded by pity or anger. God is not mocked. He is *karmādhhyakṣa*, the lord or supervisor of *karma*. If we repent for our sins and change our behaviour, God takes note of it, and assists us in our endeavour to improve.

Heaven and hell are not physical areas. A soul tormented with remorse for its deeds is in hell, a soul with the satisfaction of a life well lived is in heaven. The reward for virtuous living is the good life itself. Virtue, it is said, is its own reward.

If the intellectual hypothesis of God as the explanation of reality is to be made into an experienced reality, our intellectual consciousness has to grow into spiritual realization, *anubhava*. Religion is a way of achieving union with that Ultimate Reality called God. Believing in the Ultimate Reality is not merely the end of a process of ratiocination but is an act of faith based on experience. Religion requires a growth from the unregenerate to the illumined consciousness called differently by different religions.

St. Paul, speaking to those who were not already believers, rightly begins the argument with the words, ‘that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him though he be not far from every one of us....’ St. Paul says :

That ye put off the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts ;

And be renewed in the spirit of your mind.

And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

The effect of the renewal is the birth of the new man. This new birth reveals itself in outward compassion.

Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger and clamour, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice.

And be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.<sup>1</sup>

In the human mind, the primitive, the archaic, the infantile exist side by side with the civilized and the evolved. We have to keep up the struggle against the inertia and evil in us. All our enemies are within. The impulses which seduce, the flames which burn, spring from that inner region of ignorance and error in which we live. Man's glory is not in never falling but in rising every time he falls. The late Professor A.N. Whitehead says : 'Religion is force of belief cleansing the inward parts. For this reason the primary religious virtue is sincerity, a penetrating sincerity. Religion is the art and theory of the internal life of man.'<sup>2</sup> The way from passion to peace is by self-conquest. There is a nobler life than that of sinning and suffering. The measure of a man's saintliness is by the degree to which he has

<sup>1</sup>St. Paul.

<sup>2</sup>In *Ac. Psychology* (1953), p. 472.



been able to overcome the frailties of his nature. Religion is not a way out of life but a way unto life. The realms of spirit and life interpenetrate. The general assumption that Hinduism negates social values and sacrifices material and cultural needs to a world-negating spiritual quest is not correct. It is true that when we have the vision of Reality, we feel that we are strangers in the outer, visible, alien world of appearance. We do not feel at home in it. We act in it impressed by the harmony behind the flux of the world. It is said that against the sole reality of divine being and the paramount need to realize it all the rational and ethical effort involved in the human struggle is ultimately unreal and unsubstantial. But Indian thinkers have taught that there can be no transcendent realization without the conditioned effort. It is not quite correct to hold that Saṃkara thinks that the unitive knowledge of *brahman* is incompatible with social activity. If Saṃkara affirms that *brahman* alone is real and that nothing exists outside of *brahman*, it means that the phenomenal world is only unreal insofar as we fail to experience it as an expression of *brahman*. To eyes that are open to the 'One without a second', the world of becoming is a world of being in which it is possible to act creatively and in so doing to realize the One in the creative union of the two. The knowledge of Self is enjoined so that the knowing self may act.

In all religions the life-affirming and life-denying impulses confront each other. It is the interplay of these two impulses that has again and again renewed Indian thought and driven India forward on her

tireless spiritual quest.

While a few Hindus insist on ultimate unity to the extent of rejecting diversity as illusion and renouncing all action, all desire, all that is corporeal, the majority of the Hindus look upon the unity as reality itself in diversity of creation and demanding devotion and love from the creatures. All religions demand the practice of love and compassion. The Atharva Veda says : 'Like-heartedness, like-mindedness, non-hostility do I create for you ; do ye show affection, one towards the other, as does the cow toward her newborn.'<sup>1</sup> 'As a mother protects her only son even at the risk of her own life, so one should enlarge one's heart infinitely with compassion for all sentient beings.' True sacrifice is self-sacrifice as exemplified in the Servant songs of Deutero-Isaiah and it alone is acceptable to God and potent to rouse response in others. Hillel remarks : 'What is hateful unto thee, do not do unto thy fellow.'

Somewhere in the Talmud, I believe, there is a dispute over whether or not the world ought to have been created. The conclusion reached was that it would have been better for all concerned had the universe never come into being, but since it does exist, man ought to devote himself to the doing of good deeds. St. Paul says: 'I appeal to you by all the mercy of God to dedicate your bodies as a living sacrifice, consecrated and acceptable to God; that is your cult, spiritual life.'<sup>2</sup> The Apostle says: 'Be not overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.'

<sup>1</sup> *ātmanā jñātavya ity etat mokṣārthaṁ na ca coditaṁ karma-pravṛtti-hetutvam ātma jñānsya lakṣyaṭe. Śāstradīpikā.*

<sup>2</sup> Romans, XII. 2.

While all the religious teachers tell us that compassion gives us a motive for existence, a guide for action and a reason for courage and helps us to diminish the sum of human suffering, in the very name of the God of great compassion, abominable crimes have been committed in the world. It is not enough to believe in a God of love but we must love. The rains that make the lower plains fertile are formed in the upper layers of the atmosphere. The saints are the masters who are not stained-glass figures, remote and ethereal in their sanctity. There is something in them, which we would like to spread everywhere in the world. It is there but what it is we cannot say. It is there in their blood and bones, in the breath of their speech, in the lights and shades of their personalities, a mystery that can be lived but not spoken in words.

On the rock of moral law and not on the shifting sands of political or economic expediency can be built a civilized society with individual freedom, social justice and political equality. Truth, freedom and righteousness are essential to peace. The Evangelist tells us how 'the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them. And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me. Then saith Jesus unto him, Get' thee hence, Satan : for it is written, Thou shalt worship thy Lord thy God and Him alone shalt thou serve.'<sup>1</sup>

In the new society we need a new universal reli-

<sup>1</sup> *Matthew, IV. 8-10; Luke, IV. 5-8.*

gion. By it we mean not a uniform religion but a religion of awareness and love, of wisdom and compassion, *prajñā* and *karuṇā*, of truth and love. Religions must be cured of their provincialism and made to reveal their universality. This does not mean spiritual vagueness or ambiguity.

Tolerance implies an elementary right belonging to the dignity of every man. The right to believe like the right to live a free, unfettered life, is fundamental to the concept of brotherly love. We have had in our country peaceful co-existence of different religions. It is not mere passive co-existence but an active fellowship, a close inter-relation of the best of different religions. Co-existence is the first step and fraternity is the goal. We have not adhered steadfastly to these ideals and have suffered often. Yet the ideal has been kept in view and supported by great leaders like Ram Mohun Roy, Ramakrishna, Tagore and Gandhiji.

The view of tolerance is based on the conviction that all transcendental use of the logical categories, all attempts to submit the transcendent to the finite, are wrong. Nature and history announce God's presence but do not disclose his whole nature. Religions are cut off from one another by mutual incomprehensiveness. We are born or trained in certain traditions of religion. Loyalty to tradition does not mean imprisonment within it. We adopt different symbolic representations of the Supreme determined by our age, circumstances and upbringing. At the heart of every symbolic formulation lies that which is beyond form. We do need a form but it is not to be confused with the spiritual reality. The latter

is one; the former is diverse. Each religion is unique so far as its form is concerned. We can hold that our particular formulation is valid formulation of truth without denying the validity of other forms. We must develop those loyalties to the free mind and spirit which transcend the narrower loyalties of caste or class, race or nation. Whatever progress we make at the expense of these values is morally wrong.

The seers of all religions affirm that the various peoples of the world form a community with a common purpose and a common destiny. It is said that the whole world is the fatherland of a noble soul. The application of this universality of spirit requires us to look upon our enemies not as monsters of evil but as misled by their obsessions and as capable of change. History tells us that friends become enemies and enemies friends. We had three centuries of devastating wars between Catholics and Protestants and yet Bishop Stephen Neill in his book, *Anglicanism*<sup>1</sup> says: 'Our best theologians have shown how Protestantism and Catholicism are two essential aspects of God's truth.'

In the settlement of international disputes we should prefer conciliation to violence, forgiveness to vengeance, negotiation to direct action. If this attitude, which is the only one consistent with faith in a Universal God, dominates our minds and hearts we may be released from our afflictions and draw near to the human hope of a universal society. Even as members of different faiths may retain their

<sup>1</sup> Penguin Series (1958).

loyalties and yet work for a fellowship of faith, members of different national communities may 'seek and find fellowship beneath or beyond their present conflicts'. Faith in the Divine should inspire us all to work in a co-operative spirit for the cause of peace.

## **An Indian Approach to Religion**

**T**HERE is no reason to believe that there are fundamental differences between the East and the West. Human beings are everywhere human and hold the same deepest values. The differences which are, no doubt, significant, are related to external, temporary social conditions and are alterable with them.

East and West are relative terms. They are geographical expressions and not cultural types. The differences among countries like China, Japan and India are quite as significant as those among European or American countries. Specific cultural patterns with distinctive beliefs and habits developed in different regions in relative isolation from one another. There were periods when China and India were pre-eminent in cultural affairs, others when Western nations became dominant. For the last four centuries Western nations aided by scientific development have dominated the East.

The world has now reached a stage of inter-communication. All societies are fast becoming industrialized and new sets of values are springing up. We are called upon to participate in the painful birth of a new civilization. If we are to live together in peace we must develop international co-operation and understanding.

It is for the political leaders to determine the practical steps by which the sources of power and communication now available to us can be used for closer co-operation and friendliness among the peoples of the world. No political understanding can be made permanent without understanding at the cultural level. Apart from its intrinsic importance such understanding contributes to the enrichment of human experience. Facile generalizations are made by philosophers of history which are highly misleading. Hegel in his *Lectures on the Philosophy of History* says that 'Persia is the land of light; Greece the land of grace; India the land of dream; Rome the land of Empire.'

If we glance at the long history of India covering nearly five millenniums, we are struck by the contrasts of extreme situations, summits and chasms. The country rises, wavers, falls, shrinks into herself, tears herself to shreds and pieces and again endeavours to regain her greatness. She passes through different moods of pride, resignation, shame, detachment, excitement and adventure. Yet all through runs an idea which she is attempting to realize, a kind of equilibrium, a wholeness of human nature, which events and vicissitudes inseparable from all forms of life shake but do not shatter. The country is mobile on the surface but constant in the depths. India is a complex equilibrium with an extremely rich diversity. The country is not defined by any dominant race or religious doctrine or economic circumstances. We have a remarkable mixture of ethnical elements but the great tradition which has affected all her people is the work of human hands.

It will be useful to consider briefly the metaphysical presuppositions which are the formative forces of any civilization. Metaphysics is not an esoteric pursuit. It has an important place in the life of every reflecting person.

Philosophy is a wide term including logic, ethics, aesthetics, social philosophy and metaphysics. The last is concerned with the ultimate nature of things. The search for metaphysical certainty has been the source of much that is profound and significant in the history of thought. Metaphysics comprises two main fields: ontology, derived from the Greek word for being, that is, reality which exists in its own right and is not dependent on anything else; and epistemology which is derived from the Greek word for knowledge. What can the human mind know with certainty? How does opinion differ from knowledge? What is real? What can be known? These are the problems with which metaphysics deals.

One may indicate the Indian approach to the problems of religion by a reference to the first four aphorisms of the *Brahma Sūtra*, which is said to give the main purport of the Upaniṣads which are a part of the Vedas. The four *sūtras* deal with (i) the need for the knowledge of Ultimate Reality, (ii) a rational approach to it, (iii) the experience of Reality, and (iv) reconciliation of seemingly conflicting formulations of the nature of Ultimate Reality.

The theme of the first *sūtra* is *brahmajijñāsā*. It indicates man's desire to know the Real. There is dissatisfaction with the world. History, astronomical, geological, pre-human and human, appears to be an aimless process of creations and perishings from

which no meaning for the individual human existence can be derived. We discern no principle in the whole chain of being which demands man's meaningful participation in the adventure of time. The world seems to be meaningless, vain and futile. It is *anitya*, transitory, and *asukha*, painful. Animals are subject to disease and decay but are not capable of distress. The Buddha bases his way of life on the fact of suffering. St. Augustine speaks of 'the ceaseless unrest which marks the temporal life of the individual'. The consciousness of death is the cause of anxiety. Confucius writes:

*The great mountain must crumble.*

*The strong beam must break*

*And the wise man wither away like a plant.*

If man loses himself in the world and its diversions, his anxiety may be a brief, fleeting fear. But man is a thinking being. When he reflects on the finite and limited character of his existence, he is overcome by fear which is, as Heidegger says, 'more primordial than man himself.' When the fear becomes conscious of itself, it becomes anguish. The tragedy of the soul is added to the contemplation of the world as mortal.

The consciousness of the finiteness and morality of all our achievements makes us ask whether there is anything beyond and behind the world process. If there were not a Beyond, we should have been satisfied with the world process. The suffering individual cries out in the words of the Upaniṣad:

*Lead me from the unreal to the real,  
Lead me from darkness to light  
Lead me from death to eternal life.*

*asato mā sad gamaya: tamaso mā jyotir gamaya;  
mṛtyor mā amṛtaṁ gamaya*

It is the presence of the Infinite that makes us dissatisfied with the finite. It reminds us of the word of God that Pascal believed he had heard: 'You would not seek me if you had not already found me.' Compare the confession in *Romans*: 'We do not know how to pray as we ought but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with sighs too deep for words.' The suffering is the result of the conflict in us. Man belongs to two worlds, the spiritual and the natural. He is *sad-asadātma*, being and non-being.

Existence is essentially a process in time. It is perched on a razor's edge, as it were, which divides being from non-being. Human being is involved in non-being. We were not: we will not be. What is the nature of being? What is the mystery of non-being which surrounds and conditions existence as we know it? Being needs non-being for its manifestation. St. Augustine in the first chapter of his *Confessions* asks what his longing for God means. Does it mean that he has found God or has not found God? If he had not found God he would not know of God since it is God who gives him the yearning for God. If he had found God and knew him fully he would be incapable of yearning since he would be fulfilled and so would not have to struggle and suffer.

Karl Barth in his *Epistle to the Romans* has a notable passage relating to the inner, invisible conflict:

‘Men suffer, because bearing within them...an invisible world, they find this unobservable, inner world met by the tangible, foreign, other, outer world, desperately visible, dislocated, its fragments jostling one another, yet mightily powerful, and strangely menacing and hostile.’ Life is a perpetual drama between the visible and the invisible.

The problem of meaninglessness cannot be solved by religious faith alone. The faith has to be sustained by metaphysical knowledge. We have to think out the metaphysical presuppositions and attain personal experience of the religious *a priori* from which all living faith starts. We need intellectual effort and spiritual apprehension, metaphysics and religion. Only reasoned faith can give coherence to life and thought.

The idea suggested by the Scriptures requires to be clarified by the use of reason. The worlds of reason and religion do not turn in different orbits. Indian thought is firm in its conviction that religious propositions should be grounded in reason.

The second *sūtra* makes out that God is the world ground, the source from which the world proceeds, by which it is maintained and ended, *janmādasya yataḥ*. How does it happen that there is something rather than nothing? Being is already there without reason or justification. It is not exhausted by any or all of its appearances, though it is there in each one of its appearances. The world with its order, design and evidence of purpose cannot be traced to non-intelligent matter. Materialism is the theory which regards all the facts of the universe as explicable in terms of matter and motion. It explains all physical

processes by physical and chemical changes in the nervous system.

Though there are a few Christian theologians like Karl Barth who protest against the intrusion of reason into the realm of religious faith, the main tendency in Catholic and many Protestant forms of Christianity is, however, to use reason for the defence of faith. In his Epilogue to *My Life and Thought*, Dr Schweitzer writes: 'Christianity cannot take the place of thinking, but it has to be founded on it... I know that I myself owe it to thinking that I was able to retain my faith in religion and Christianity.'

The *Brahma Sūtra* (1.1.2) takes its stand on the *Taittiriya Upaniṣad* which distinguishes matter, life, mind, intelligence and spirit in the world process. In the world, to use Leibniz's words, 'there is nothing fallow, nothing sterile, nothing dead'. There are no sharp cleavages. The gradation from one order of being to another is so imperceptible that it is impossible to draw the line that shall distinctly mark the boundaries of each. Everything in nature is linked together. All beings are connected together by a chain of which we perceive some parts as continuous while others escape our attention.

We cannot account for this cosmic process if we do not assume the Divine Reality which sustains and inspires the process. Even as we admit a mystery behind the cosmic process, we recognize a mystery behind the flux of mental states.

Existentialism is not a phenomenon of modern times. It is one of the basic types of thought which appears in the history of philosophy whenever we stress the difference between the individual being of

man and the being of objects in nature. There is a difference between the being of self and the being of things. Man not only *is* but he *knows* that he is. His being is open to himself. Knowledge is confined to the world of objects but the self is comprehended from within. There is objective knowledge as well as subjective comprehension.

Metaphysical thinking which bases itself on experience holds that nature is grasped with the concept of necessity and the nature of the self by that of freedom. Without this concept, our understanding of man's nature will be deficient and distorted. While both man and nature are the creation of God, the being of man is made in the image of God<sup>1</sup> and is therefore quite distinct from the being of nature. Man is not a *res cogitans* which, though distinct from *res extensas* is still a *res*, an objective concept and not the personal 'I'. We cannot understand man scientifically, as if he were only an unusually complicated object of nature. An objective account depersonalizes man and reduces him to a heterogeneous mass of fragments which are studied by the different sciences. There is the biological man, the social man, the political man and also the individual man who feels pain and joy, bears responsibility, does good or evil and is conscious of his alienation from himself when he ceases to be a subject and becomes an object.<sup>2</sup>

A philosopher's loyalty to reason does not commit

<sup>1</sup>*Genesis*, 1.26.

<sup>2</sup>But I have that within which passeth show;

These but the trappings and the suits of woe.

—*Hamlet*, I. ii.

him to the proposition that the nature of Ultimate Reality can be apprehended only as an object of reason. Many philosophers both in the East and the West have reached the conclusion that reality is supra-rational, that it is not in its ultimate nature accessible to conceptual understanding, that religious insights are also genuine revelation of Ultimate Reality.

The third *sūtra śāstrayonitvāt* may mean that the Supreme is the source of Scripture, or that we obtain the knowledge of Reality from Scripture. All philosophy starts from experience and returns to experience. Religion is not the mere affirmation of propositions. It is not simply an exercise of intelligence. It is the response of the whole man. It claims total allegiance though it may not always command it. The Real is not an idea or a hypothesis. It should become an experienced fact. A non-discursive immediate cognition of the Real, *aparokṣānubhūti*, *lokottarajñāna* is possible. This is not a mere glimpse into Reality but a steady communion with it. As Boehme says, it is 'the country which is no mere vision but a home'. In spiritual experience we pass from time to eternity. This does not mean an extinction of the limited ego; it is liberation into the cosmic and transcendent consciousness.

The *śāstras* or scriptures are the records of the experiences of the seers who have grappled with the problem of Reality. Their claim to acceptance does not rest on the logical validity of a set of propositions about God or the historical validity of the reports about the activities of God. Such statements may be shaken by scientific or historical discoveries. The experience may be gained by any one who is willing

to undergo a certain discipline and put forth effort.

Those who have the experience are the pioneers in the world of spirit. They walk by sight, not by faith. Authentic religion is based on the consciousness of being in direct relationship with the Supreme. This experience transcends all forms, all images and concepts. The union is effected in the central self which is the root of intellect and will alike. All religious utterances are vain attempts to deal justly with the meaning of the experience which has been attained.

The Buddha is called *guhya-pati* or the Lord of mysteries. He stresses *bōdhi* or the Enlightenment. In all its forms Buddhism insists on intuitive insight. The Zen discipline asks us to cut through the complexities of conceptual thought to reach a radical transformation of being and consciousness.

The fourth *sūtra* deals with the reconciliation of the different reports of the seers about the nature of Reality as recorded in the Scripture. Science leads to a reverent acceptance of mystery. Religion tells us we can have a personal experience of the Ultimate Mystery. The philosophy of religion is based primarily on the data gained by religious men rather than on the rational concepts of abstract philosophers. We try to create out of the experience something that will save the memory of it. Whitehead tells us: 'Words do not convey it except feebly: we are aware of having been in communication with infinitude and we know that no finite form we can give can convey it.' St. Augustine says: 'We believe we know the inner mysteries, but we are still in the outer court. *Nos initiatos credimus, in vestibulo haeremus.* Our descriptions are all partial truths and not whole

truths. What is implicit in the Scriptural statements is exhibited in a connected system of thought.

There are two forms of the Supreme Reality: *nirguṇa* and *saṁguṇa*, qualityless and qualified. When we lead up to the Supreme from the observed data, the Supreme is conceived to be the Cosmic creator, governor and guide of the universe. When we experience the Supreme, it is understood to be transcendent to the world, lifted above all its categories and is described in negative terms. A great deal of zeal, passion and ingenuity has been spent on the talk of resolving the problem to which silence or adoration would seem to be the most adequate response. The nature of the Absolute is manifested by the comment of silence.<sup>1</sup> The Supreme is conceived in a twofold way according to Śaṁkara.<sup>2</sup>

In the *Mahopaniṣad* Brahman is described as void, as trivial, as unmanifested, unseen, inconceivable and qualityless.<sup>3</sup> The Buddha says: 'Verily, there is a realm where there is neither the solid nor the fluid, neither heat nor motion, neither this world nor any other world, neither sun nor moon. This I call neither arising nor passing away, neither standing still nor being born nor dying. This is the end of all.'<sup>4</sup> St. Augustine steeped in neo-Platonism defined the Absolute in negative terms: 'God is not even to be called ineffable, for to say this is to make an

<sup>1</sup>*mauna-vyākhyā prakīrtita para-brahma-tattvaṁ*,—*Dakṣiṇa-mūrti stotra*.

<sup>2</sup>*dvirūpaṁ hi brahmāvagamyate, nāma-rūpa-vikāra-bhedopādhiviśiṣṭaṁ, tad viparītaṁ sarvopadhi-ṣṛjitaṁ*.

<sup>3</sup>*ēṣa hy eva śūnya ēṣa hy eva tuccha ēṣa hy evāvvykto*—'*drśya cintyo nirguṇaś ca*'.

<sup>4</sup>*Udana*. 80. E.T. by Woodward.

assertion about him. The Real is an unconditioned transcendent and can be grasped by a language without symbols.<sup>1</sup>

The popular religion of India consists in the worship of a personal God through prayer, devotion and dedication.

Organized religions strive to inspire the common man with a faith in the existence of God as revealed in or by the founder of a religious system. They also prescribe a discipline by which one can reach the Supreme. The Indian thinker wishes us to remember that God is above all the religious systems. He is without end or limit, though theologians attempt to set limits to Him.

The way in which we describe the Supreme is determined by the presupposition of our age, our tradition and personal upbringing. Time consecrates and what is gray with age becomes sacred to us. In this way the gods and goddesses of the people of India were identified with the Supreme. The insistence throughout has been on the inward vision and transformation.

The significant limitation of the competence of

<sup>1</sup>Professor Paul Tillich in his article on *The Religious Symbol in Daedalus* (1958) pp. 14-15, 20, observes: The divine beings and the Supreme Being, God, are representations of that which is ultimately referred to in the religious act. They are representations, for the unconditioned transcendent surpasses every possible conception of a being, including even the conception of a Supreme Being. Insofar as any such being is assumed as existent it is again annihilated in the religious act. In this annihilation, in this atheism immanent in the religious act the profoundest aspect of the religious act is manifest. Shelley said in *Queen Mab* that there is no God but added a note: 'This negation must be understood solely to affect a creative deity. The hypothesis of a pervading Spirit coeternal with the universe remains unshaken.'

reason to the understanding of Reality is not inconsistent with a rational investigation of the nature of experience. When F. H. Bradley said in a jesting mood that 'metaphysics is the finding of bad reasons for what we believe by instinct' he suggested that our deepest convictions required to be vindicated by reason. It is the only way by which we can have a sure foundation for our beliefs. The revelations though self-certifying to the experiences may be only subjective wish-fulfilments, objects projected by the individual. As for the deities to whom offerings are made, some Mīmāṃsākās contend that they are of the nature of words only and are cognized through words, or are mental projections.<sup>1</sup> Mutually contradictory experiences are accompanied by strong subjective convictions. Hobbes is right in his observation that for a man to say that God 'hath spoken to him in a dream is no more than to say that he dreamed that God spoke to him.'<sup>2</sup> The authenticity of an experience has to be judged by rational considerations.

Many people all over the world have clung with passionate intensity to beliefs in fiendish demons which never existed save in their imagination. It is by the employment of reason that we can repudiate such beliefs. Professor H. de Wolf writes about 'the worship of such fiendish deities'. 'There has been no lack of existential faith in them. In obedience to their supposed commands, thousands have fasted, burned themselves, cast themselves from precipices, endured shame, fought fanatically and offered their

<sup>1</sup>*śabdāmakā eva devatā śabdabodhyā va manah kalpita rūpā vā devatāḥ svikaryāḥ. Mīmāṃsā, 2122.*

<sup>2</sup>*Leviathan* (Everyman Edition), p. 200.

own children as bloody sacrifices. Will we condemn the use of reason by which great multitudes have learned that such gods did not exist, and hence have been freed from their tyranny?"<sup>1</sup> Though reason may not be adequate as an organ for the apprehension of the Divine, it is useful as a critic of claims to such apprehension.

By the use of reason, Indian religious thought strives to rid religion of obscurantism and lift faith above superstition. If we practise diabolisms and condemn others, it is like Satan rebuking sin. The mythologic beliefs and dogmas form the content of a closed static religion. The intuitive vision of Reality which transcends the objective and formal elements gives life and meaning to them.

In an ancient Upaniṣad, it is said that we should attain an insight into Reality by *śravaṇa*, hearing, *manana*, reflection, and *nididhyāsana*, meditation. The first gives us scriptural teaching, the second a rational approach and the third the way to assimilate into our being the truth heard and reflected upon. These three are considered in the first three *Brahma Sūtras*. The reconciliation of authority, logic and life is suggested in the fourth *sūtra*.

We live today on the edge of a precipice. The perils of atomic and hydrogen developments dominate our thoughts and trouble our conscience. A great atomic scientist of the United States, when he saw the first atomic blast where the flame and the smoke rose from the earth and touched the fringe of the atmosphere of the New Mexican city, said that

<sup>1</sup>*The Religious Revolt against Reason*, p. 115.

he was reminded of the *Bhagvad-gīta*. He quoted: 'If the radiance of a thousand suns were to burst at once into the sky, that would be like the splendour of the Mighty One. . . . I am become death, the shatterer of the worlds.'<sup>1</sup> The effects of the hydrogen bomb are vastly more devastating. Their incalculable destructive power, we feel, will act as a great deterrent to war. But by these threats of limitless horror we are appealing to the baser instincts of human nature—fear, greed and hate.

It is a familiar conception of Indian thought that the human heart is the scene of the age-old conflict between good and evil. It is assailed by weakness and imperfection but is capable also of high endeavour and creative effort. Man is a composite of life-giving and death-dealing impulses, *yasya chāyā amṛtam, yasya mṛtyuh*, whose shadow is immortality and death, as the R̥g Veda<sup>2</sup> puts it. The *Mahābharata* says:

*amṛtam caiva mṛtyuś ca dvayam dehe pratiṣṭhitam  
mṛtyur āpadyate mohāt satyenāpadyate amṛtam.*

Immortality and death are both lodged in the nature of man. By the pursuit of *moha* or delusion he reaches death; by the pursuit of truth he attains immortality. We are all familiar with the verse in the *Hitopadeśa* that hunger, sleep, fear and sex are common to men and animals. What distinguishes men from animals is the sense of right and wrong.<sup>3</sup> Life

<sup>1</sup>XI, 12, 32.

<sup>2</sup>X, 10, 121.

<sup>3</sup>*āhāra nidrā bhaya maithunāṁ ca sāmānyam etat paśubhir-narāṇām dharmo hi teṣāṁ adhiko viśeṣo dharmena hīnāḥ paśubhiḥ samānāḥ.*

and death, love and violence are warring in every struggling man.

Modern psychology repeats this truth in technical terms. There are two sets of instincts in each human being, those which conserve and unify, called erotic instincts from the sense which Plato gives to Eros in the *Symposium*, and those which destroy and kill, which are called the aggressive or the destructive instincts. The death instinct functions in every living being striving to work its ruin in contrast to the erotic instinct which makes for the continuance of life. These two sets of instincts do not work in isolation. They get mixed up like the waters of the river Yamunā, the dark daughter of Yama, and those of the river Gangā issuing forth from the tangled locks of Śiva. Destructive instincts are sometimes stimulated by an appeal to idealism. Ordinary people are kindly and generous, friendly and co-operative but by propaganda and indoctrination we can drain their vital springs, call the destructive instincts into play and raise them to the power of a collective neurosis. The cruelties of history are perpetrated in the name of noble causes. The atrocities of the Inquisition, for example, drew their strength from the destructive instincts which were released in the name of religion. In the past, men were infected with the war fever by an appeal to the great causes of freedom and democracy, honour and justice, which often served as a camouflage for the lust for power, religious fanaticism and race prejudice. So all wars were regarded as just and holy wars.

Civilization consists in the gradual subordination of the instinctive life to the sway of reason. It is the

duty of independent thinkers who do not yield to pressure or intimidation, who are fervent in their quest of truth, to foster the feeling of community and diminish the force of aggressive instincts. When we feel persuaded that the enormous power which nations now possess will act as a deterrent to war, we have in view the little savage, the 'old Adam' that lies at the bottom of every human breast. Of all emotions the least compatible with freedom and the most degrading to man is fear. By planting appalling fear in men's hearts, we corrupt their morals and destroy their minds. A London schoolmaster writes:

In the bus on the way to school I asked one of our small boys (age 11) what he intended to be when he grew up. He replied: 'Sir, I need not worry, as by that time there will be nowhere to grow up on.'<sup>1</sup>

The failure of nerve, the hysterical reaction are due to lack of faith in the spirit and the institutions, in the democratic way of life which we value above life itself. What is the democratic way of life? It includes good faith, tolerance, respect for opinions which we do not share, equal justice for all, the power to speak one's own thoughts, to act according to one's conscience, do one's duty as one sees it, to live under a Government which he has a voice in making and unmaking, to promote the causes and advance the reforms which command his devotion, however repugnant they may be to the rulers.

Many of our difficulties are due to this fact that

<sup>1</sup>Mr. R. R. Wills of Bow Brook School, Peopleton, Worcestershire, in the *London Times*, April 5, 1754.

the suppressed peoples are demanding the very liberties which we hold so dear. The unrest in Asia and Africa is proof that democracy is growing and not dying. If we sincerely believe in our professions that all men are created equal, that all persons, irrespective of caste and creed, race and nation are entitled to the rights of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, if we accept seriously the principles of religion that we are members one of another, that in God there is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither Greek nor Barbarian, if we are eager to implement the principles of the U. N. Charter, if our faith in democracy is not skin-deep but from the heart's core, then our whole approach to the problems that now divide the world will be very different. We will then stand by the people who are suffering from colonial domination, economic oppression and racial discrimination and strive to bring them relief by removing the hardships which now fetter their lives. These are problems which are independent of communism. They are natural, indigenous and legitimate. We must face without fear the revolts and revolutions of the oppressed peoples of Asia and Africa. If, on the other hand, we defend the exploiters and condemn the exploited, if we persist in ruling the mass of mankind by force and fear, if we compete with one another in depriving the unhappy peoples of the world of hope and faith, we have ourselves to blame for the world situation. If the whole world is living under pressure it is because of our hesitations and compromises.

Peace cannot be had without our paying the price for it. The price can be paid only by those who have something to offer, those who have power and

wealth. They should decide not to use their power for the domination of people, not to use their wealth for their corruption. Power and wealth depart from nations as they depart from men. The instances of Assyria, Babylon, Crete, Egypt, Greece, Rome and Spain leap to our eyes. What endures for any nation is what it contributes to the common heritage of all nations, to literature and arts, to science and government, to freedom and democracy.

In cases of national or ideological conflicts, we should seek not a precarious military solution but a permanent human one. We cannot divide the peoples of the world into blacks and whites. These sharp distinctions which develop feelings of hatred for large sections of humanity are not adequate to human relations. The common people in every country are like ourselves, ordinary human beings, who wish to go about their daily work, do their best for their children, cultivate their own garden and live at peace with their neighbours. If some of them are willing tools of their Governments, many are their unwilling victims. Instead of threatening those who are opposed to us with frightful disaster, we should appeal to their higher nature. We may not love each other or like each other; we may at least talk to each other, try to understand each other. We must learn to put ourselves in the place of other people and realize how they feel.

It may not be inappropriate to remember that the Cross is the symbol of ultimate victory, the swallowing up of death by life. It proclaims that understanding and compassion are more powerful than fire and sword. 'Blessed are the meek', those who have patience, humility, understanding and love.

**'In my Father's house there are many mansions', said Jesus. No nation need assume that it has been cast by heaven for the role of the lords of creation. If there are people who differ from us, our duty is not to fight them but to help to remake them, to open their eyes, to demonstrate to them the sterility of their programmes, to make them aware of the rich horizons of the human spirit. We may have to put up with a good deal of malice and misrepresentation but the democratic way of life requires of us charity and understanding. The glory is not in war but in reconciliation. Since no Government in the world desires us all to go down in a common disaster we must try to negotiate. If agreement is impossible then peace is impossible, but peace does not mean submission to the enemy. Negotiation is not appeasement nor is bomb-rattling diplomacy. Difficulties are there to be faced and overcome. We may not be able to solve them forthwith. We must learn to live with difficulties. The world cannot be suddenly or magically transformed. Human progress embraces vast stretches of time. There is no need for impatience or discouragement. Failure should not bring forth anger. Error is not crime; it is only youth, immaturity. 'When a tree grows up to heaven', says Nietzsche, 'its roots reach down to hell.' There is no duality between heaven and hell. The opposition is between higher and lower stages of development. When our vision penetrates beyond the stuffy horizons of good and evil, we will be gentle with the frailties of the weak and be stern only with ourselves.**

**Faith without works is empty. We are not prepared to extend democratic liberties to those who do not**

possess them. We are not prepared to adopt the democratic spirit in dealing with our adversaries. Infidelity to our own ideals has to be cured if the process of rebarbarization of the world is to be checked.

If, as the French saying has it, war is too important to be entrusted to the generals, we may say that peace is much too fragile to be entrusted to politicians. The intellectuals must become aware of their mission to build a universal society, which is truly free and democratic, based on the preciousness of the human soul. Out of the anguish of our times is being born a new unity of all mankind in which the free spirit of man can find peace and safety. It is in our power to end the fears which afflict humanity, and save the world from the disaster that impends. Only we should be men of a universal cast of mind, capable of interpreting peoples to one another and developing a faith that is the only antidote to fear. The threat to our civilization can be met only on the deeper levels of consciousness. If we fail to overcome the discord between power and spirit, we will be destroyed by the forces which we had the knowledge to create but not the wisdom to control. For the new effort we need the sense of religious purpose.

In the Rg Veda, which is our earliest literary document, we see the face of early India, while it was yet dawn from which the bright day has grown. For those early writers, literature was the outcome of spiritual discipline, a purging of the emotions, a setting aside of all selfish considerations. That experience is a fever in which the mind is on fire and the spirit in exaltation. Literary artists, who are emancipated in their minds and hearts, are the spokesmen of the unborn world

unity, based not on fear, greed and hate, but on that which is eternal in man, the spirit that hungers and thirsts after righteousness, the spirit that will not be denied.

The universal Reality transcends the cosmic process and exceeds the categories of the empirical world. It is therefore treated as indefinable by linguistic symbols or mental concepts. It is without form and yet is the source of all forms. From the cosmic end the Supreme Reality becomes the cosmic lord, Naṭarāja, the Lord of Dance.

The image of Naṭarāja is the representation of the pure, undifferentiated Being which stands behind the image with a curtain and a string of bilva leaves suspended in front of it. Naṭarāja is the manifestation of the Lord of the cosmos. He is the perfect image of becoming as distinct from pure being. He symbolizes rhythm, action, movement. God is a creator-artist.

In regard to these manifestations, different aspects are brought out in different symbols. This makes for the appreciation of other forms of worship. A mediaeval Indian mystic wrote: 'There may be different kinds of oil in different lamps, the wicks may also be of different kinds but when they burn, we have the same flame and illumination.' Whatever may be our view of the Divine, whatever may be our mode of approach, if our effort is sincere, we reach the goal.

True religion is not what we get from outside, from books and teachers. It is not the religion of routine which we adopt as a matter of habit. It is the aspiration of every human soul, that which unfolds within oneself, that which is built by one's

life-blood. It is the fulfilment of our nature in which there is joy which overflows into the world's service.

Nanda, one of the sixty-three famous Saiva devotees, though born an outcaste, by his intense devotion to the Supreme, became a nāyanār and is adored as a saint. The earth is made radiant by the greatness of such people who have risen from small beginnings to great heights of devotion. The story of Nandanār illustrates that the distinctions of caste and outcaste are untenable for the authentically religious being.

Here in Chidambaram we find a repudiation of cosmic purposelessness, acceptance of various forms of worship which are accepted as valid, insistence on human equality and participation in the world's upward evolution. Those are the beliefs and aspirations of our people, however disloyal some of us may have been to them. It is this disloyalty, false complacency, facile religion and pharisaism that are responsible for the weakness of our social fabric. We should raise our voice against the unbridled might of social, economic and religious reaction. Only when we shake off our internal insufficiencies will it be possible for us to make significant contribution to human welfare.

## **The Basic Insights of Religions**

**I**N the present dangerous divided state of the world we may perhaps find in religions an overriding bond that would bring the nations together. Thanks to scientific developments, distances have diminished and communications have improved. The greatest event of this diminished world is the discovery of the arts, literatures and religions of the East. If we are to evolve into a universal society, we must break down the barriers separating the East and the West and build bridges of understanding. The times are propitious. We need the will and the effort.

A scientific study of religions and their inter-relations in the past helps us to feel that religion is real only in religions which are particular and concrete. The empirical fact of the plurality of religions, each with its own peculiar character and structure, should not hide from us the transcendent unity of religions. The vital differences among the living faiths of mankind are over-arched by a fundamental unity of vision and purpose which embraces all mankind. If we can discern a common basis underlying the different modes of Christian thought from the Roman Catholic to the Quaker faith, from the Unitarian Church to the Salvation Army, students of

comparative religion may find a common substratum of religions. The unredeemed situation of man, the longing for liberation, the recognition of the Divine Reality and the many ways to reach the Real are found in all religions.

All religions affirm that man is confronted by something greater than himself which, in contrast to human nature and all other phenomena, is Absolute Reality. It is the transcendent, the Divine, the other, the true being behind the world of events. God is the first principle of being, the ground and substance of all existence.

The Absolute Reality is also the Absolute Good for which man is athirst. Man needs not only to be aware of it but to be in communion, in harmony with it. It is the condition which makes man feel at home in the world. God, who is the highest truth, righteousness, beauty and love, is man's highest good. He knows what we do not know, loves beyond our powers of loving and guarantees the achievement of the good even when our faltering efforts fail.

This transcendent Reality is immanent in the human soul. The human spirit is grounded in Godhead. The Upaniṣad saying 'That thou art', refers to this fact of Divine Immanence. The essence of the Buddha is present in every being. 'The Kingdom of God is within you', according to Jesus. For St. Paul the human spirit is the temple of the Divine Spirit. For St. Augustine God is 'more inward than my innermost being'. The Christian mystics speak of the 'birth of God in the ground of man's soul'. This is the doctrine of the second Adam. Christ is the first-born of a new race of men. The Qurān says

that God is nearer to us than our artery in the neck.

The External, is present in the soul of man as its secret ground and it forms a bridge between the finite and the infinite. From the spark of the Divine which is in every human soul, the greatness, the creativeness and the unboundedness of the human spirit is derived. The soul can escape from necessity, from the pressure of time. The self is partly determined and partly determining. It has creative power. Because man is a spark of the Divine, he has creative freedom. Insight into truth is the foundation of human happiness. The way of man's fulfilment is through sacrifice, love and service. By developing detachment and objectivity towards one's own needs and sufficient compassion for other's needs we grow into the likeness of the Divine. Mahāyāna Buddhism affirms that the great heart of compassion, *mahā-karuna-cittam*, is the inmost essence of the Divine and this heart is open to all. True universality of spirit consists not in knowing much but in loving widely. Renunciation, contemplation, prayer help us to attain union with the Divine. The saints 'pray without ceasing', in St. Paul's words. Their whole life, according to Origen, is 'one single great continuing prayer'. By it we not only ascend to God but attain the revelation of God in the heart of man. When the insight into truth is gained, passions are subdued, ill-will subsides and inward conflict ceases. When the spark in us is released it becomes a fire which cleanses the earth. It can be released only if we end our narrow egoism, greed, anger, hatred, all the restricting appetites and passions which keep the individual locked up inside his mortal self. Every

religion gives us a ladder to perfection which we have to climb by effort. The way to fulfilment is not like a mechanical escalator which takes us to the top when we get into it, though we make no effort.

*Mokṣa*, *nirvāṇa*, eternal life are not an escape from life but the realization of life's fullest possibilities, the perfection of personality. Religion is not only the way to God, but the way to man. It is not mere contemplation, 'the fight of the alone to the alone', as Plotinus said. It is also a way of active service. After attaining Enlightenment, the Buddha preached to the people the sacred truth disclosed to him. *Sutta Nipāta* declares that love has no limitations. 'As a mother protects her one and only child with her love, so the disciples of the Buddha have boundless love for all beings.'

There is a temptation to keep away from the world. A Muslim saint, Abdul Quddus of Gangoh, writes: 'Muhammad of Arabia ascended the Highest Heaven and returned. I swear by God that if I had reached that point, I should never have returned.' This world negation is not the main tendency of religions. Meister Eckhart declared that if someone in his highest rapture notices a sick man in need of soup, it would be better for him to leave his rapture and serve the man in need.

We must reply to our adversary 'with mercy and goodness'. Lao Tse says. The *Mahābhārata* says: 'Even an enemy must be afforded appropriate hospitality when he enters the house: a tree does not withhold its shade even from those who come to cut it down.' Man is bound to be on the move till the

cosmic process achieves its end of the liberation of all beings.

The religious souls adopt a sacramental view of the universe. The world is not a private dream of man. There is no unbridgeable gulf between what is beyond and what is here. We need not abandon our life in time to reach the timeless. The Divine is here and beyond. Eckhart describes the seer, as 'one who having looked into the sun, thenceforward sees the sun in everything'. After his enlightenment, Fox found that 'all creation gave another smell beyond what words can utter'. The religious soul moves and acts in the world bearing all its shocks, with peace of mind and heart. In the midst of life's disharmonies, he keeps an equable temper.

To attain spiritual insight, inward piety, certain forms and rites are prescribed. The body of doctrine, myth, rite, cult and worship form the objective side of religion. These may differ in different religions but behind all these disguises there is the tendency to attain religious wisdom. We have to accept these forms to communicate the universal truth to those who are in a particular stage of history. What is permanent and universal is translated into something temporary and local. Tradition and environment condition both the vision of Reality and its presentation. These expressions cannot be stationary. Truth is not something given once and for all. Truth may be divine in its inspiration but it is always in human form. Professor A. N. Whitehead says: 'The trouble with the Bible has been its interpreters, who have sealed and whittled down that sense of infinitude into finite and limited concept and the first interpreter

of the New Testament was the worst, Paul.’<sup>1</sup>

‘By their fruits ye shall know them’, and not by their beliefs. We have in all religions the spirit of love and sacrifice, sincerity and obedience. Savonara told his countrymen: ‘Jews and Turks observe their religion much better than Christians, who should take a lesson from the way the Turks bear witness to the name of God.’ In Lessing’s *Nathan, the Wise*, we read: ‘Nathan, Nathan, you are a Christian; by God, a better Christian there never was.’<sup>2</sup>

The saints and devotees of all religions form the

<sup>1</sup>*Dialogues of A. N. Whitehead.*

<sup>2</sup>Mr Marsh, an able lawyer who had lived many years in Madras, asked the missionaries to learn at the feet of the Hindus instead of trying to teach them. In fact the picture he painted of the Hindus and their religion was one which the most enthusiastic Hindu would have loved to emulate:

‘Indeed, when I turn my eyes either to the present condition or ancient grandeur of that country; when I contemplate the magnificence of her structures, her spacious reservoirs constructed at an immense expense, pouring fertility and plenty over the land, the monuments of a benevolence expanding its care over remote ages; when I survey the solid and embellished architecture of the temples, the elaborate and exquisite skill of her manufactures and fabrics, her literature sacred and profane, her gaudy and enamelled pottery on which a wild and prodigal fancy has lavished all its opulence; when I turn to the philosophers, lawyers and moralists who have left the oracles of political and ethical wisdom to restrain the passions and to awe the vices which disturb the commonwealth; when I look at the peaceful and harmonious alliances of families, guarded and secured by the household virtues; when I see amongst a cheerful and well-ordered society, the benignant and softening influence of religion and morality, a system of manners founded on a mild and polished obeisance, and preserving the surface of social life, smooth and unruffled—I cannot bear without surprise, mingled with horror, the idea of sending out Baptists and Anabaptists to civilize or convert such a people at the hazard of disturbing or deforming institutions which appear to have hitherto been the means ordained by Providence of making them virtuous and happy.’ P. Thomas, *Christians and Christianity in India and Pakistan* (1954), pp. 179-180.

one great invisible community of God. Though they belong to different conditions of geography and history, they share these basic insights. They may be various in their thoughts and devotion but are constant in their vision of the Divine. The flowers which they offer may be of different kinds but the worship is one. In their view dogmatism and intolerance are the products of spiritual pride and perversity. If we wish to move toward higher levels of freedom, we must break away from the constraining egoisms of the self.

The relations of one religion to others are not those of error and truth for they are all facets of a single truth, portraits of a single sitter. The saints tolerate even if they do not approve other visions. The Puritan divine, Isaac Pennington, said: 'All truth is a shadow except the last. But every truth is substance in its own place, even though it be but a shadow in another place. And the shadow is a true shadow, as the substance is a true substance.'

All religions seem to be varied manifestations of the essentials of true religion. Even those who acknowledge the existence of God admit the inadequacy of human ideas of God. What the atheist denies is an idea of God, not God Himself. What the theist affirms is not an idea of God but God Himself. We should not transfer the absoluteness which belongs to Divine Reality to its historical formulations.

Again even religions have their genealogies. They have borrowed generously from others. Modern phenomenology of religion points out the striking similarities in the world of religious phenomena, rites, customs and ethical demands. Take the concepts of

Virgin birth, the death and resurrection of the redeemer God, the inspiration of sacred scripture, the efficacy of grace, the use of the rosary, the conception of Trinity, the Kingdom of God, priesthood, monasticism—these are to be found in many religions and are not exclusive to any one. The picture of the Divine mother and the Child, Yasoda and Kṛṣṇa, Mother Mary and her Child, the Buddhist Goddess of Mercy Kwannon remind us of the image before which all humanity has bowed. Speaking of Christianity, Mr Herbert J. Mueller observes: 'Its central figure of the Redeemer was at least as old as the Tritos Soter of the early Greeks, and its promise of personal immortality was still older, echoing through the history of timeless Egypt. From Babylon came the idea of God as the maker of heaven and earth, from Persia the dualism of Satan and God, from Egypt the last judgement, from Syria the resurrection drama of Adonis, from Phrygia the worship of the Great Mother, from Greece and Rome the idea of universal law. From sources too ancient to be identified came its baptism and communion. From the various mysteries came other ritual elements of the mystery of its mass such as incense, vestments, beads, holy water, genuflexion and chanting. Without this ancient and cosmopolitan heritage, Christianity could scarcely have established its claim to universality.'<sup>1</sup> Religions at their highest adopt a view of positive appreciation of other faiths.

### **Hinduism**

Hindu thought from the period of the Ṛg Veda till our

<sup>1</sup>*The Uses of the Past* (1954), p. 187.

own times has adhered to this view.<sup>1</sup> *anantā vai vedāḥ*: endless are the Vedas.<sup>2</sup> They are capable of varied interpretations. Scriptures are held in great esteem by all religions.

Speaking about religion Gandhiji said: 'It is not Hinduism which I certainly prize above all other religions, but the religion that transcends Hinduism, which changes one's very nature, binds one indissolubly to the truth within and ever purifies.' When the Indian people are said to adopt secularism, it does not mean that they support irreligion or materialism. They appreciate all faiths and respect all prophets. This understanding of other faiths helps the deepening of one's own faith, and its enrichment. 'Tolerance does not mean indifference toward one's own faith but a more intelligent and purer love for it. Tolerance gives us spiritual insight which is as far from fanaticism as the north pole is from the south. True knowledge of religion breaks down the barrier between faith and faith. Cultivation of tolerance for other faiths will impart to us a truer understanding of our own.'<sup>3</sup> It is true that the Hindu religion tolerates some of the forms of wor-

<sup>1</sup>He (Shivaji) made it a rule that, whenever his followers went plundering, they should do no harm to mosques, to the Book of God, or to anyone's women. Whenever a copy of the Holy Quran came into his hands, he treated it with respect, and gave it to some of his Muslim followers. When the women of any Hindu, or Muslim, were taken prisoners by his men and they had no friend to protect them, he watched over them till their relations came to buy them their liberty.'

From the *History of India* (written in Persian by Kafi Khan, the Court historian of Aurangzeb).

<sup>2</sup>*Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa* II. 10.11.

<sup>3</sup>Clifford Manshardt, *The Mahatma and the Missionary* (1949), p. 131.

ship which are not in accord with the spirit of reason and the demands of conscience in the hope that in the general atmosphere of Hinduism, these forms of worship and practices will fade away.<sup>1</sup> This has not, however, happened to the extent expected. A more vigorous spiritual life is demanded today.

### Buddhism

Buddhism is well known for its great respect for other faiths. Aśoka adopted Buddhism in the tenth year of his reign (c. 260 B. C.) and for the rest of his life he was a follower of the Buddha. Though it was his personal faith, he did not strive to convert his people to it.

In Rock Edict XII, Aśoka proclaims that 'the faiths of others all deserve to be honoured. By honouring them one exalts one's own faith and at the same time performs a service to the faith of others. By acting otherwise, one injures one's own faith and also does disservice to that of others. For if a man extols his own faith and disparages another because of devotion to his own and because he wants to glorify it, he seriously injures his own faith. Therefore, concord alone is commendable, *samavāya eva sādhuḥ*, for through concord men may learn and respect the

<sup>1</sup>Gilbert Murray finds it depressing to study 'these obscure congregations drawn from the proletariat of the Levant, superstitious, charlatan-driven and helplessly ignorant, who still believed in gods begetting children of mortal mothers, who took the "Word", the "Spirit" and the "Divine Wisdom" to be persons called those names and turned the immortality of soul into the standing up of the corpses, and to reflect that it was these who help the main road of advance towards the greatest religion of the Western world.'

conception of Dharma accepted by others. King Priyadarśi desires men of all faiths to know each other's doctrines and to acquire sound doctrines. Those who are attached to these particular faiths should be told that King Priyadarśi does not value gifts or honours as much as growth in the qualities essential to religion in men of all faiths.<sup>1</sup> He was intent on the growth of true religion, *sāra-vṛddhi*.

In Hindu and Buddhist thought there is orthodoxy but this is not their essence. It is the intensity and quality of the religious quest that constitutes the essence of religion and not the object.

### Judaism

Though the general tendency in the three religions of Judaism, Christianity and Islam which have common historical roots is one of exclusiveness and intolerance, there are indications of an opposite character in all these religions. The simplicities of religions were emphasized by the prophets of Israel. Amos declared that Yahveh cared nothing for ceremonial worship but for justice and righteousness. Hosea stressed not merely his righteousness but His love. Micah sums up the whole thing: 'He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee but to do justly, and to love mercy and to walk humbly with the God?' Isaiah made Yahveh the one God of all mankind. Though the Israelites remained His chosen people, they were chosen to make Him known to the rest of mankind. Malachi says: 'From the

<sup>1</sup>*The Edicts of Ashoka*, Ed. by Nikam and McKeon (1958) pp. 51-52.

rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same, My Name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense shall be offered unto my Name and a pure offering.<sup>1</sup> 'Have we not all one Father? Hath not one God created us? Why then are we faithless to one another?'<sup>2</sup> The belief in one Divine Reality should awaken in the minds of all believers the sense of belonging to one fellowship and the obligation to act towards one another fraternally. Malachi repudiates religious provincialism and exclusiveness.

### Christianity

Christianity has been greatly influenced by the Mystery religions of Greece. What is experienced is expressed in various symbolical forms. The well-known hymn of Cleanthes reads:

*O God, most glorious, called by many a name,  
Nature's Great King, through endless years the same;  
Omnipotence, who by Thy just decree  
Controllest all, hail, Zeus, for unto thee  
Behoves Thy creatures in all lanes to call.*

Plutarch tells us: 'There is one Sun and one Sky over all nations and one God under many names.'

Early Christianity had an esoteric character something akin to the mysteries of Eleusis. Origen speaks of secret doctrines that can only be taught to the initiated. Clement adopts the same view and Dionysius the Areopagite mentions a secret and oral

<sup>1</sup>1. 11.

<sup>2</sup>Malachi II. 10.

tradition. St. Paul knew Jesus only by hearsay but while on his way to Damascus on a mission of persecution he had a blinding vision of the Risen Christ who called to him from the heavens. This experience was a turning point in his career. The Lord he saw was a Saviour-God comparable to the gods of the Mystery religions, one who had died and been resurrected and through whom man could achieve immortality. While Jesus proclaimed a Kingdom of God that men could earn simply by repentance and righteous behaviour, Paul taught that salvation was through Christ and Christ alone. St. Paul decided to break away from the ritual observances of Judaism and to create a new world religion. He adopted the ideals of the Jewish prophets, added to them the teachings of neo-Platonism and made Jesus the central figure.

Early Christianity was intimately connected with Hellenistic Oriental Environment and early Christian thought was permeated by Hellenistic thought and expressed itself in Hellenistic forms. One of the grievances of Protestantism against Roman Catholic Christianity is that it has absorbed many pagan elements.<sup>1</sup> For example, the exact date of Jesus's

<sup>1</sup>The religion of the Great Mother, with its curious blend of crude savagery with spiritual aspirations, was only one of a multitude of similar Oriental faiths which in the later days of paganism spread over the Roman Empire, and by saturating the European peoples with alien ideals of life gradually undermined the whole fabric of ancient civilization. . . . The saint and the recluse, disdainful of earth and rapt in ecstatic contemplation of heaven, became in popular opinion the highest ideal of humanity, displacing the old ideal of the patriot and hero who, forgetful of self, lives and is ready to die for the good of his country. . . . This obsession lasted for a thousand years. The revival of Roman Law, of the Aristotelian philosophy, of ancient art and literature at the close of the Middle Ages marked the return

birth is not known. Against the opposition of the East where Jesus lived, the Western churches selected the twenty-fifth of December because of the pagan tradition. It was a festival day that marked the winter solstice according to some and was therefore treated as holy to the Sun-god, especially to Mithra who was the chief rival to Christ as to the Saviour-God.

Jesus gave us a simple code. He did not baptize or prescribe baptism as essential. His institution of the Eucharist as described in the Gospels was a simple memorial devoid of any magical significance. The Church made the sacraments necessary for salvation as did the mystery cults. The Church was greatly embarrassed when it found the rite of communion in Mithraism and imagined that the Devil did so to mislead simple Christians. A great deal of formalism got into the Christian faith which Jesus condemned in the High priests and the Scribes. 'In vain do they worship me teaching of doctrines the commandments of men.' A good deal of doctrinal developments obscured the divine simplicity of Jesus' personality.

The Gnostics denied the human nature of Christ as an inconceivable degradation of deity. His human body must have been mere appearance since God could not really suffer. This doctrine was condemned

of Europe to native ideals of life and conduct, to saner, manlier views of the world. The long halt in the march of civilizations was over. The tide of Oriental invasion had turned at last. It is ebbing still.'

J. G. Frazer, *The Golden Bough: Adonis, Attis, Osiris: Studies in the History of Oriental Religions* (1907), pp. 251-3.

Gibbon summed up 'the history of the decline and fall of the Roman Empire' as 'the triumph of barbarism and religion'.

since it violated the whole Gospel story and the Resurrection. Arius was a simple man who took the common-sense view that Christ with his human body was less than God, a view supported by the Gospels. 'I came down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of Him that sent me.' 'He that sent me is greater than I.' Athanasius felt that the Pauline doctrine of the Redeemer was inconsistent with Arianism. Jesus had to be both true man and true God, man to atone for mankind, God to redeem mankind. Christianity had to retain the deity of Christ and the unity of God. If Christ were not God, salvation through him is not possible: if unity is lost, it would become polytheism. At the Council of Nicæa the Creed was adopted that Christ 'was begotten, not made, being of one essence with the Father'. The triumph over Arianism led to further controversies. If Christ was both human and divine, did he have one nature or two separate natures? Some stressed the divine nature and were revolted by the idea that Christ was born of a woman and experienced the embarrassments of the flesh. 'The faith of the Catholics,' wrote Gibbon, 'trembled on the edge of a precipice where it was impossible to recede, dangerous to stand, dreadful to fall; and the manifold inconveniences of their creed were aggravated by the sublime character of their theology.' In his consciousness of awful peril, the monophysites insisted on the one incarnate nature of Christ. 'May those who divide Christ be divided with the sword, may they be hewn in pieces, may they be burned alive,' said one Christian Synod at Ephesus. The Council of Chalcedon settled on the formula that is accepted by both

**Protestantism and Catholicism.** 'Two natures without confusion, without change, without division, without separation.' When the Holy Ghost was added to these two we got the Trinity. The transcendent nature of God beyond human comprehension and human standards of goodness has not only revealed himself but appeared on earth in human form. He was himself the Word.

We are not today worried about the heresies that once shook Christendom. The basic claim of Christianity is that God incarnated himself in Jesus alone at a certain time and place and that redemption from conflict of both man and nature was made possible by his death. In him a wholly new order of being was manifested with a perfect harmony of body, mind and spirit. From this belief it would follow that there was no hope for salvation freely given to everyone who was not fortunate enough to accept this belief, to those outside the Christian Church, the prophets of Israel, the philosophers of Greece. This position was not adopted by many notable Christian thinkers.

Justin Martyr (2nd century A. D.) states: 'All those who have lived with the Logos, i.e. with the eternal divine world-reason are Christians, even if they have been taken as atheists, as Socrates and Heracleitus. Origen admonished his fellow-Christians to respect non-Christian forms of worship.' In Tertullian's phrase, the pagan soul is *naturaliter christiana*. St. Augustine's famous statement that Christian religion existed from the beginning of the world and that it came to be called Christianity only after Christ came into the flesh, is well known. Nicholas of Cusa

regarded all religions as different expressions of the Word of God. 'It is you, O God, who is being sought in the various religions, in various ways, and named with various names, for Thou remainest as Thou art, to all incomprehensible and inexpressible. Be gracious and show Thy countenance. When thou wilt graciously do so then the sword, jealous hatred, and all evil will cease and all will come to know that there is but one religion in the variety of religious rites.'<sup>1</sup> The Swiss Reformer Zwingli believed that all great heathens are found in heaven. Schleiermacher says: 'I find the multiplicity of religions to be grounded in the nature of religion.... This multiplicity is necessary for the complete manifestation of religion.' 'As nothing is more irreligious than to demand general uniformity in mankind, so nothing is more un-Christian than to seek uniformity in religion.' Schleiermacher glorified the unity of all religions in his *Reden*. He says: 'The deeper you progress in religion, the more the whole religious world appears as an indivisible whole.' Max Müller writes: 'There is only one eternal and universal religion, standing above, beneath and beyond all religions to which they all belong or can belong.'

Professor Vladimir Lossky in his *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church* emphasizes that for the orthodox Christian every statement that can be made about God is inadequate and tends to become an idol. The mystery of God cannot be expressed in concepts of reason. It is an experimental knowledge of the living God. Lossky observes: 'There is no theology apart from experience; it is necessary to

<sup>1</sup>*uno religio in rituum varietate.*

change, to become a new man....The knowledge of God is necessarily the way of deification.'

For the Orthodox Church, as for the early Greek Fathers, all theology is eventually apophatic or negative. It refuses to form concepts about God. It is, Lossky says, 'an attitude which excludes all abstract and purely intellectual theology, which would adapt the mysteries...of God to human ways of thought. It is 'an existential attitude involving the whole man.' In experience we transcend all concept. In Western Christendom, however, theology became a matter of concepts. It is called the Queen of the Sciences. The criticism of religion in recent times is more a criticism of the false images of God set up by scholastic thinkers.

Unfortunately, the predominant tendency of current Protestantism denies any revelation of God outside the Christian faith and the non-Christian religions are looked upon as a vain attempt at self-glorification. Christ is not the crown or fulfilment of other religions but is something totally different and discontinuous, the unique initiative of God in His merciful dealings with fallen men, which are under the judgment of God. The truth is contained in the Holy Scriptures which contains divine revelation and if others do not accept it, it is due to their blindness and ignorance. God punished not only the worship of other gods but erroneous views about His own unnamable nature.

The different claimants to absolute truth are impatient of one another and when in power use the torture-chamber, the stake and the executioner. They expect us to be conformists rather than seekers,

believers rather than thinkers.<sup>1</sup>

Mr Herbert J. Muller writes: 'The Synoptic Gospels make clear that Jesus did not conceive himself as the revolutionary author of a new world religion, and in a real sense was not the founder of Christianity. According to these Gospels, he made no plain, open claim to divinity. They suggest that he came to regard himself as the Messiah, though he never boasted of the Davidic ancestry that Luke and Matthew are at pains to give him, but even if he had publicly adopted this role, instead of requesting his disciples to keep it a secret, his listeners would not have assumed his divinity—the Messiah of tradition was not the Son of God. In any case he did not offer salvation through a redeeming Lord. He taught rather that through repentance and righteousness any man could earn the Kingdom of Heaven by his own efforts. Then the Church went on to make him the equal of God and to insist that salvation was possible only through Christ. The central doctrine of Christianity became the doctrine of the Incarnation which was apparently unknown to Jesus and his first followers.'<sup>2</sup> When it is said that 'outside the Church

<sup>1</sup>Hugh L'A. Fausset writes: 'There is no reason to believe that the particular incarnation which occurred at Bethlehem nearly two thousand years ago, momentous as its consequences have been, was final. Indeed history suggests the reverse. For there has been little sign in that part of the world which has professed to be Christian that man has been nearer redemption than in pre-Christian ages. When we remember, for example, the ferocities of the Thirty Years War, the fiendish massacres of the Albigensian Crusade, or the burnings of heretics, all of which occurred when the Church, Mother or not of the faithful, was most powerful, it is hard to regard the doctrinal exclusiveness of the Christian claim as having been justified by events. *Towards Fidelity* (1952), p. 86.

<sup>2</sup>*The Uses of the Past* (1954), p. 149.

there can be no salvation' what is meant is 'outside the *spirit* of the Church'. All men of good faith may hope for salvation.

### Islam

Islam, with its severe monotheism and emphasis on the transcendent majesty of God, gathered within itself not only some of the central beliefs of Judaism and Christianity, but also some aspects of the early tribal religions of the Arabian desert and Zoroastrianism. It is much more than its component parts. Islam views itself as the fulfilment of Judaism and Christianity. Muhammad refers to the revelation of 'Jesus, the son of Mary'. Though Islam may have started as a Christian heresy, it has developed a uniqueness of its own even as Buddhism which was originally a reform movement of Hinduism has developed a system and structure of its own.

The Qurān is the work written or dictated by Muhammad. For Muslims it is the manifestation in time of the Eternal Word of God through the dual agency of the Angel Gabriel and the Prophet Muhammad. The Muslims look on Muhammad as the last of God's messengers after whom there would be no prophecy so that nothing remained except to comment on and interpret his words.

From the beginning, there has been a universalist and non-exclusive emphasis in Islam. Abu Hanifa (died 767) says: 'Difference of opinion in a community is a token of divine mercy.'<sup>1</sup> In the 13th century Ibn-al-Arabī taught that man should in the pursuit of

the knowledge of God not seek him through an exclusive approach by any one religion, disregarding other faiths but consider all evidence accessible to man. The story of the elephant is used by Muslim theologians as by the Hindu, Buddhist and Jain thinkers.<sup>1</sup>

Farid Din Al-A'ar (died 1230) wrote: 'Each finds a way of his own... each one is enlightened according to his own capacity and finds his own place in the knowledge of truth.'<sup>2</sup> Every one's life is a road to himself. Akbar's attempt to reconcile the different religions with which he was familiar is well known. Dara Shikoh, eldest son of Emperor Shah Jahan, composed a work called *Samudra-saṅgama* (the Confluence of Oceans)<sup>3</sup> which is the same as the Persian work *Majma-ul-Bahrain* (The Mingling of Oceans). The book is intended to illustrate the agreement in fundamentals between Hinduism and Islam. Aurangzeb got back to the exclusive view.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>In Browne's E.T. it reads:

Blind delegates by blind electorate  
Were therefore chosen to investigate  
The beast, and each, by feeling trunk and limb  
Strove to acquire an image clear of him.  
Thus each conceived a visionary whole  
And to the phantom clung with heart and soul.

<sup>2</sup>*Tadhkirat al-Awliya*.

<sup>3</sup>See *A Critical Study of Dara Shikoh's Samudra-Saṅgama* by Dr. Roma Chaudhuri (1954).

<sup>4</sup>Cp. the lines:

In whom Islam attained a loftier fame  
And wider honour graced the Prophet's Law,  
He the last arrow to our quiver left  
In the affray of Faith with Unbelief;  
When that the impious seed of heresy,  
By Akbar nourished, sprang and sprouted fresh  
In Dara's soul, the candle of the heart  
Was dimmed in every breast, no more secure  
Against corruption our Community

Tipu Sultan on many occasions requested the Śringeri Śaṁkarācārya to offer prayers to God. Once he expressed great pleasure at the *sahasracandī japa* performed under the guidance of the Śaṁkarācārya for the welfare of his kingdom.<sup>1</sup> Throughout the history of Islam, respect for other faiths has been a persistent tendency. The Sufis advocate this view.

*A Church or a Temple or a Kaaba stone,  
Koran or Bible or a Martyr's Soul,  
All these and more my heart can tolerate,  
Since my religion now is love alone.*

The source of conflicts is not the diversity of religions but the lack of toleration. Toleration does not mean indifference born of secret pride or contempt for others. It follows from the conviction that the Absolute Reality is a mystery of which no more than a fraction has ever yet been penetrated. Toleration is open-mindedness. We may follow different roads but our goal is the same. As we are engaged in the same quest we must treat one another as spiritual brethren. Different religions should be treated as variations of a common theme. What does not serve me may serve some one else. In the matter of religious beliefs and practices, tolerance should be our

Continued; then God chose from India  
That humble-minded warrior, Alamgir,  
Religion to revive, faith to renew,  
The lightning of his sword set all ablaze  
The harvest of impiety; faith's torch  
Once more its radiance o'er our counsels shed.

*Revelation and Reason in Islam* by A. J. Arberry, p. 114.

<sup>1</sup>See *Mysore Archaeological Department Annual Report*, 1916, pp. 74-5.

sacred duty. If we practise it, the forces of rigidity and fanaticism will wear away and yield to something more worthy. If we conceive of one true God as a jealous one, worship of other gods becomes erroneous. In the East, in China and India, the gods are not jealous and there are no national religions. The seeker of religious truth may be a doubter, a wanderer. What expands the powers of man is not the possession of truth but the search for truth. The most quoted utterance of Lessing is that the value of a person is determined not by his being in possession of truth but by his honest effort to strive after truth. 'If God held in His right hand all truth and in His left the precious ever-active urge for truth, although with the qualification that I would ever and always err and said to me "choose", I would humbly grasp His left hand and say: "Father, give; pure truth is only for you".'

The Hindu *Gāyatrī* prayer is a perpetual quest for illumination. The scientist knows that truth is always provisional and hypothetical and what matters is the search. The followers of different religions should regard themselves as fellow-seekers of truth. When we feel that we possess the truth, we get hardened towards those who do not have it. The conviction that one's own faith gives a deeper insight into the mystery of the universe should not engender hostility to those who cherish other beliefs. Gandhiji wrote to an American missionary who claimed that the Christian way was the best for all: 'You assume knowledge of all people which you can do only if you were God. I want you to understand that you are labouring under a double fallacy: that what you think

best for you is really so: and that what you regard as the best for you is the best for the whole world. It is an assumption of omniscience and infallibility. I plead for a little humility.' Professor A. N. Whitehead observes: 'What I am objecting to is the absurd trust in the adequacy of our knowledge. The self-confidence of learned people is the cosmic tragedy of civilization.'<sup>1</sup> 'Wherever there is a creed,' he says, 'there is a heretic round the corner or in his grave.'<sup>2</sup>

The attitude of exclusive possession of truth is not consistent with the catholicity of the great religions at their highest. Besides, every great religion has learnt from others. If religion is to gain the dynamic power which it once possessed of shaping society, rivalries of religions should give place to co-operation among them. The world can no longer afford to be divided on this vital matter. God is active everywhere in Christianity, or in other religions. If we believe that God has revealed truth not to all mankind but to a chosen few, Hindus, Buddhists, Jews, Christians or Muslims, strife and hostility start. The history of Christianity from the thirteenth to the seventeenth century illustrates the tragic effects of a unique, intolerant and exclusive truth. If we worship not the God of love but the God of jealousy which worked such havoc in the past, then there will be no peace in the world. It is this view of religion that has been a stumbling-block to sensitive souls, and had led to the abandonment of

<sup>1</sup>*The Philosophy of A. N. Whitehead*, ed. by Schilpp (1941), p. 698.

<sup>2</sup>*Adventures of Ideas* (1935), p. 66.

religion by them.<sup>1</sup> I am persuaded that this intolerant view of Christianity which led to the Inquisition and the Wars of Religion is not fair to the teaching of Jesus that God is love. We read in the New Testament that 'God is love' (1 John IV.16), that his Word is the light which lighteth every man (John 1. 9), that he left not himself without witness (Acts XIV. 17) that he willeth that all men should be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth (1. Timothy 11. 4). Mankind is tired of scholastic discussions and dogmatic controversies. Christianity in the West has produced a series of mutually exclusive Churches, each asserting a particular validity about which controversy was silenced by secession. But from the time of St. Paul's letter to the Church in Corinth, attempts to end the divisions have been made periodically. Today this attempt at union should be undertaken on a wider basis. The realm of the spirit is the sphere of freedom. It does not favour or penalize the acceptance of any religion by its members. It fosters a new kind of creative sympathy between the adherents of the different faiths. It is our duty to work together without sacrificing whatever is valuable in our traditions and achieve that deepening power that comes from fellowship.

Only such a view can be the basis of a civilized

<sup>1</sup>Professor Friedrich Heiler writes: 'It is only too true that Christianity has been disgraced by inexplicable crimes that are not found in the same form and degree in any of the other great religions. Neither Islam nor Buddhism nor Hinduism has slaughtered anything like as many human beings for their beliefs as have the Christian Churches . . . With the stain of this disgrace upon it how can Christianity claim to be absolute, compared with the incomparably less tainted non-Christian religions?' *Hibbert Journal*, January 1954, pp. 112-113.

society where we strive with passion to understand other religions and serve their followers. The last hymn of the R̥g Veda has the following words:

Walk together; speak in concord; Let your minds comprehend alike, let your efforts be united; let your hearts be in agreement, let your minds be united, that we all may be happy.

*saññ gacchadhavam saññ vadadhvam  
saññ vo manāññsi jānatām.  
samāññi va ākūtiḥ, samāññā hṛdayāññi vaḥ  
samāññam astu vo manāññ  
yathā vaḥ susahāññati—(X 191).*

## New World Civilization

**H**UMAN beings are everywhere the same and they hold the same deepest values. The differences among them which are, no doubt, significant are related to external, temporary social conditions and are alterable with them. Modern methods of transport and communication are breaking down barriers and building bridges of co-operation. All societies are fast becoming industrialized and we are all speaking the same language in science. New sets of values are springing up everywhere. We are called upon to participate in the painful birth of a new world civilization which is possible only with international co-operation and understanding. In spite of the sharpness of international conflicts, the world is getting to be one.

Recent developments have given rise to the erroneous impression that while the West is scientific in outlook, the East is spiritually minded. The one is rational while the other is religious. The one is dynamic and perpetually changing while the other is static and unchanging. If we take a long view we will find that China and India made fundamental contributions to science and technology till three or four hundred years ago and that there have been illustrious examples of religious idealism and sanctity in the West. The more we understand each other

the more we feel that we are like one another. East and West do not represent two different types of consciousness or modes of thought.

Science and religion are aspects of every culture. The rational and the spiritual are two strands inextricably woven in human nature, though in varied patterns. One or the other may be more prominent in different periods of human history.

In the last fifty years there has been a revolt against traditional metaphysics. From Thales to Whitehead in the West, from the seers of the Rg Veda down to our own time in India, philosophy has been speculative. In the contemporary world, logical positivism and existentialism represent the revolt against metaphysics.

The so-called revolution in philosophy is not altogether new. We have had the positivist tendency in Greek thought and British empiricism.

It is argued that nothing can be true or even meaningful unless it can be understood in terms of sense experience. In ancient Greek thought Protagoras held it and Plato criticized it. In modern European thought Hume holds that there can be no true or meaningful assertions about God, soul and immortality or objective moral standards. Hume discards beliefs about these as 'sophistry and illusion'. Kant rejected this view.

Comte inaugurated the idea of positivism with his law of three stages of cultural development: the first stage of every culture is theological, theology being for Comte another name for superstition; the second stage of metaphysics substitutes principles and forces for the ancient gods; the third stage is positivism which deals with scientific knowledge.

To Hume's doctrine of experience, we have added the technique of linguistic analysis. The meaningfulness of statements about God, soul and immortality are due to linguistic confusion. Religious beliefs are treated as 'nonsense' by which we allow ourselves to be deluded. All forms of metaphysics are discarded as unprofitable enterprises.

Logical positivism adopts the verification principle. Any sentence can have factual meaning only if it is capable of verification in sense experience. Religious propositions are not capable of empirical verification and so do not possess any factual meaning.

Universally accepted scientific principles are not capable of verification by sense experience. We do not deny laws of nature on that account. The principle of verification is not a self-evident statement; nor is it capable of verification by sense-experience.

Even those who claim to eliminate metaphysics by asserting that there is no transcendental reality are making metaphysical statements about the nature of the universe. Even though we may repudiate metaphysical system from Plato's idealism to Marx's materialism, metaphysical thinking seems to be inescapable. Whenever thought grows conscious of itself there is philosophy. Even he who denies philosophy does so as the result of a philosophy which is not aware of being one. Whenever standards of value are used and criticism is applied there is philosophy. The logic of the analytical philosophers is itself based on metaphysics, certain presuppositions about the universe. Whatever value logical analysis has can be defined only in terms of an attitude to life which logical analysis by itself cannot establish.

When the logical positivists proclaim that experience is the indispensable source of data for philosophical investigation they limit the word 'experience' to sense experience but we have moral, aesthetic and religious experience also. Our intense experiences, passion for knowledge, love of beauty, moral despair, the sense of the numinous cannot be excluded from the world of empiricism.

The dissociation of intellect from the other sides of human life is the prominent feature of logical positivism. When we speak of sciences we should include under it not only mathematics, physics and the biological sciences but also the social sciences and those which deal with spiritual values.

Professor C. D. Broad of Cambridge says in the Preface to his *Five Types of Ethical Theory*:

It is perhaps fair to warn the reader that my range of experience, both practical and emotional, is rather exceptionally narrow even for a don. Fellows of colleges, in Cambridge at any rate, have few temptations to heroic virtue or spectacular vice; and I could wish that the rest of mankind were as fortunately situated. Moreover, I find it difficult to excite myself very much over right and wrong in practice. I have, e.g., no clear idea of what people have in mind when they say that they labour under a sense of sin: yet I do not doubt that, in some cases, this is a genuine experience, which seems vitally important to those who have it, and may really be of profound ethical and metaphysical significance. I realize that these practical and emotional limitations may make me blind to certain

important aspects of moral experience. Still, people who feel very strongly about any subject are liable to over-estimate its importance in the scheme of things. A healthy appetite for righteousness, kept in due control by good manners, is an excellent thing, but to 'hunger and thirst after' is often merely a symptom of spiritual diabetes.

Any serious attempt at philosophical interpretation will have to consider these data. Again, the concepts which modern mathematics and physics use are not directly verifiable in sense experience. They lead to deductions which can be related eventually to experimental situations. Metaphysical theories are interpretations of the nature of the world and are tested by their adequacy to the observed data, by their capacity to co-ordinate positive knowledge. They are not mere speculations but interpretations of experience. In the case of scientific theories, what we can verify is their consequences insofar as these can be calculated and observed. We do not observe electrical energy, gravitation or relativity but we calculate what will be observed, in carefully determined circumstances, if these are true, and then verify whether they are actually observed or not. This is indirect verification. Metaphysical theories are capable of such indirect verification.

There are metaphysicians who claim that they are also empiricists insofar as they deal with being *qua* being. They all start with the basic datum that something exists.

All the same, positivism helps to release the nature and purpose of religion from magic, superstition and

folk-lore with which religion has got confused.

Every great philosopher is both an analyst and an existentialist. He is a poet with an intellectual conscience. Analysis without vision is expense of spirit, waste of subtlety. Undisciplined vision, unexamined intuition, sheer passion are the sources of superstition, fanaticism, madness.

The analytic and the existential tendencies are found in Socrates and Plato. We find them again in the Middle Ages, in the philosophy of the Schools.

There is always a tension between logical analysis and existential experience. Any adequate philosophy should be sustained by the integrity of reason and the claims of inward experience.

I may take two illustrations from Western thought: Plato and Kant. Plato's theory of forms is based on logical argument. When he hypostatizes the forms and affirms that absolute beauty and absolute justice are not mere concepts but have their existence in another world, when he subordinates the world of sense to that other world, he is under the influence of the Orphic and the Pythagorean views. What is given does not transcend nature but the aspiration it awakens does.

Plato had a deep sense of alienation and a vision of another world. Death is not the end. There is another world, where the soul has its being, before birth and after death. It is not logic or epistemology that leads to this view but reflection on man and his conduct.

In the *Theaetetus*,<sup>1</sup> Socrates exhorts man to 'become like a god as far as he is able to'. We feel

<sup>1</sup> 176.

a sense of lack, of privation. We have to grow beyond our present status. Man, as he is, is incomplete.

Kant confined knowledge and science to the world of phenomena. But reflection on the nature of the world led him to the conclusion that it did not constitute the whole of reality and there were supersensible entities, things in themselves. There were ideas of reason, of the soul, of the world in his entirety and of God. The realities corresponding to these ideas could not be construed as objects. They have not a constitutive but only a regulative use. They enable us to organize our experience and estimate its worth. The pursuit of science rests on a faith, a hope and a trust, the faith of reason in its own supremacy or in the rationality of the world.

The examination of our nature as moral agents enables Kant to give a richer and deeper meaning to ideas. The fact of duty is a positive illustration of the kind of reality to which the ideas of reason point, a reality, which although having a definite content is in no sense an object in the context of experience. For Kant the contemplation of the starry heavens above us should be accompanied by the recognition of the moral law within us.

In Indian thought we have both existentialist distress and rational reflection. The main concern of Indian thought is with the status of man, his ultimate goal. Nature and God are treated as aids to help man to attain security of being, peace of mind. The main interest of Indian thought is practical. Philosophy is a guide to life.

In Indian philosophical circles, a ferment is caused by the impact of Western thought on the traditional

doctrines. Generally speaking, it has not resulted in any major changes of outlook though the methods of approach have been affected. There are a few who have abandoned the Indian tradition and adopted the ideas of some Western thinkers but unfortunately they have not made any deep impression either on Indian thought or on Western philosophy. The most effective development is in the presentation of India's fundamental thought in the idiom of our age and its development in new directions. One may indicate the Indian approach to the problem of religion by a reference to the first two aphorisms of the *Brahma Sūtra*, which is said to give the main purport of the Upaniṣads which are a part of the Vedas. The two *sūtras* deal with the need for the knowledge of Ultimate Reality, and a rational approach to it.

Even as we admit a mystery behind the cosmic process, we recognize a mystery behind the flux of mental states. Metaphysical thinking which bases itself on experience holds that nature is grasped with the concept of necessity and the nature of self by that of freedom. The Real behind the cosmic process, *brahman* and the Real behind the individual ego, *ātman*, are the same.

Man's body is a perishable speck in the material universe; his mind is itself an instrument. The upward surge of nature cannot have body as its final product. There is something beyond, something that mankind shall be. The Eternal is in him but wrapped up in his constricted personality. Man's greatness is not in what he is but in what he can be. He has to grow consciously into it. His aspiration to participate in the divine creativity, his consecrated will to do so

is the instrument of the evolutionary urge. We may call it the grace of the divine or the power of the human, *deva-prasāda* or *tapahprabhāva*. Each individual has a specific role in the creative process

There is no conflict between science and religion. Nothing that science can say can affect the religious view of the importance of human personality. The universe may contain other planets in which rational creatures may exist.

Religion should not maintain what is evidently in contradiction with ascertainable scientific fact. Science does not presume to deduce a moral code from its observation of natural phenomena.

The important question is whether human beings are to be regarded as the apex of a process of natural evolution not purposefully directed or are they to be regarded as made in the image of God, the children of God. The scientific humanists believe in the power of rational, though accidentally produced, creatures to dominate the process of which they are the final result so far. But they exaggerate the extent to which human beings are free from sub-rational desires and the extent to which they can subordinate their behaviour to a plan of rational and universal benevolence. Religion holds that man exists on the level of supernature as well as nature. Kant refers to man's twofold nature. As belonging to the phenomenal or the sensible world, he is determined, as belonging to the noumenal or the supra-sensible world he is free. 'Greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world.'<sup>1</sup> Man is free to disobey the law of duty.

<sup>1</sup> *John*, IV. 4.

## Moral Principles of Civilization

**T**HE basic principle of the dignity and freedom of the individual is common to all religious faiths, if I may say, even to political systems. Marx denied God because he believed in the potential divinity of man. The Jain thinkers hold that man can attain divinity, and that God is only the highest, noblest and fullest manifestation of all the powers that lie latent in the soul of man. We have a verse in the *Mahābhārata* which tells us that there is nothing higher than man on earth:

*guhyam brohma tad idaṁ vo bravimi  
na mānuṣāt śreṣṭhataram hi kiñcit.*

Pascal tells us that man is a thinking breed superior to all the unthinking forces that fill the universe. Though they may crush him, they do not know what they do but he knows. Man is subject, not object. This subjectivity gives him inwardness and freedom. If he loses himself in the objective, he lapses into routine, rigidity, mindlessness. Democracy requires us to respect and develop the free spirit of man which is responsible for all progress in human history.

Parliamentary democracy is a political arrangement which helps us to be governed by our chosen leaders.

It does not adopt the view—if you do not agree with us we will hit you. We try to persuade others by the force of logic and not by the force of arms.

In non-parliamentary systems, every succession becomes a crisis marked by internal upheavals and frequently by outward disturbances. In the non-parliamentary government, leaders tend to become laws unto themselves and try to impose their will on their people leading to the corruption of minds and the degradation of souls. Rightly, the cult of the individual is repudiated by all political systems. It is not the individual whether he is good or bad, powerful or powerless, but the cult that is repudiated. If we accept the infallibility of any one, persecution becomes justified: men who refuse to flatter are silenced. Opponents become criminals. No society can progress if it demands hypocrisy, punishes truth and stifles the growing mind. Dictators are critical of over-praise of others, but are pleased with over-praise of themselves. The former does no harm but the latter may be their ruin.

Parliamentary democracy is likely to be adopted even by countries which do not have it now. With the maturity of leadership, political systems will alter. Even the Soviet leaders are eager to change their system: they do not wish to relapse into rigidity. Democracy is also a method by which we attempt to raise the living standards of the people. When a country attains political freedom, there is a great release of energy which till then was consumed in the struggle for freedom. Great expectations are roused and people are lifted out of the torpor of centuries and pass through all the pangs of a new

birth. Many of the people in Asia and Africa live very little above starvation level. If political democracy is to be sustained, economic development has to be speeded up. We have to crowd the sweat and tears of centuries into a generation, reduce inequalities, shake up social relations which are unjust and free ourselves from hallowed abuses and archaic customs. We have so little time to do so much. In a democratic society the rich have to accept social obligations for the poor and so is it in the world community. The advanced nations have to assist the less advanced.

In our Constitution we have pledged ourselves to international co-operation and peace. There is no isolation any more, geographical, political, economic, or cultural. The spirit of co-operativeness is to be carried beyond the nation to the community of nations. Democracy means respect for the opponent. If we believe in a certain cause and find that there are nations which do not agree with us, the democratic way requires us to try to persuade them to agree with our point of view. Even as the democratic way forbids in internal problems, direct action, mob rule, or resort to violence, in international problems also we have to assume the reasonableness of human beings and adopt the methods of negotiation, discussion, adjustment and agreement.

Unfortunately, as the world happens to be divided at the moment into two groups, we have great fear of the future, fear of the unseen peril which is often subject to unlimited exaggeration.

When the internal combustion engine, wireless, and aviation were devised, they were welcomed by all

as creditable achievements of science and technology. The penetration of outer space by the scientists, which is a great attempt to push back the frontiers of the unknown, would in normal circumstances have been received with joy and pride; but actually we have fear and foreboding, for in the present cold war atmosphere we look upon these artificial satellites from the military point of view, because from them nuclear missiles can be despatched to long distances. No people or government wish to bring about the extinction of the human race on earth; yet the unrest in the heavens has caused confusion on earth.

All governments which are democratic admit that we should give all the people of the world the opportunity for a full and fruitful life. The American Declaration of Independence states eloquently that all men have a right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. We are imperilling these rights and darkening the future of the world, by our war preparations.

The democratic way requires us to adopt peaceful co-existence and co-operative living. It asks us to strive patiently and persistently for mutual understanding, explore every avenue to reach agreement. We do not ask for submission which is the product of despair, or appeasement which is the result of demoralization. At the same time we should not be governed by fixed ideas. We should admit the fallibility of man as a constant factor in human affairs. In an equitable settlement neither group will win or lose absolutely. There should be a good deal of give and take.

The basic issue is no longer the victory of this or

that nation, of this or that group. It is the survival or suicide of man. It is a time for decision, not despair. The choice is either extinction or human brotherhood. It cannot be left to the vagaries of chance. The test of a nation's right to survive today is measured not by the size of its armaments but by the extent of its concern for the human community as a whole. We must support the concept of a United Nations with adequate authority under law to prevent aggression, to compel and enforce its decisions, to settle disputes among nations according to the principles of justice. If we develop a higher loyalty to the world community, the greatest era of human history will be within our reach. This requires us to rediscover the power of the spirit in man and re-define our purposes. Democracy, if it is to survive, must be born again. It must unlearn its national and economic idolatries, cease to be self-seeking and recapture its soul by returning to its inmost ideas.

Historians tell us that destiny hangs over individual lives as well as over States. Herodotus writes: 'As I go forward in my story, I will make notes of cities, great and small, for those that were once great, most of them have become small and those that are great in my day were formerly small. Knowing therefore that human prosperity never abides in the same place, I shall write of both alike.' Prosperity leads to arrogance, to what the Greeks call *hybris*, to disaster. Love of power is dangerous. It is not the weak nations of the world that are responsible for the present situation in the world. The political leaders of the big Powers threaten to bring the human race to the edge of disaster. They should recast their

policies and ask for a suspension of nuclear tests and work for the achievement of disarmament.

Gandhi spelt out the moral principles on which civilizations rest—truth and love, *satya* and *ahimsā*. Civilizations are saved only to the extent to which they respond to these principles and it is for us to work while yet it is day. Evil can be broken only if we respond to it with good. It is no use cursing darkness. We must increase the light which dispels the darkness. We must have faith in the spirit of man, the spirit capable of suffering and compassion, of endurance and sacrifice, the spirit which has inspired human progress all these centuries.

## Battle for the Future

**T**HE present state of the world is to thinking men a source of pride, bewilderment and alarm. It is a matter of pride that our generation has developed the great achievements of science and technology which enable us to dominate the skies, reach out to the stars and expand to the ends of the world. Our civilization is unique in that it offers us the basis of a world-wide social order. This unification of the world is without parallel in the past. To meet the challenge of the new situation, we have to devise new means and not perpetuate inherited patterns of social and international behaviour. We are bewildered that our efforts to establish a world order on principles of equity and freedom through international organizations have not been successful. Though we know that the world is one, whether we like it or not, that, in spite of political, national and racial divisions, the fortunes of every one of us are linked to those of others—even though we know it—we do not feel it in our bones. When we find that great nations are not ready to change their ways of dealing with others and persist in ways which are outmoded and dangerous, we are not only bewildered but alarmed. The world has been brought together rather too suddenly and this enforced intimacy has intensified the differences

and increased the possibilities of friction. We are baffled by the problems which our age has thrown up, for advanced nations from whom we expect leadership are failing us.

It was wrong to think that we are caught up in the march of evolution and we will be lifted to a better world in spite of ourselves. In a previous age we had faith in the inevitability of progress. When this earth was a mere molten mass, no one would have dreamed of the forms of life which have appeared. By and by the earth cooled, the oceans appeared and later plant life. There has been a steady, upward march from the amoeba through an infinite variety of other creatures, reptiles, monkeys and apes to Neanderthal man, to primitive man and thence to civilized man. A short view may show decline here and there but a long view reveals that the trend is upward in spite of periods of regression. So it is assumed that with an inexorable logic we will move forward, blindly perhaps, often haltingly, in spite of ourselves, to higher conditions of civilized life. In the nineteenth century, we had firm faith in the inevitability of progress. Believers in the doctrine of evolution tell us that the laws of natural selection will result in the transformation of the present imperfect society into a more perfect one with a finer humanity. Marxist interpretation of history confirms this view. After the two World Wars we are not so sure of our future. After the First World War we all imagined that we were reasonable beings and all the people had the same interests. We all wanted peace and so we would advance rapidly to a new social integration. The second World War pricked this bubble of progress.

The fundamental fallacy in this argument is the false analogy between natural history and human history, between the laws which govern sub-human species and those which apply to man in society. We do not doubt that man has advanced on earlier forms of life but we are not sure that there has been a steady advance in happiness and social morality. If we turn to the history of past civilizations, we see ups and downs, an upward surge, a grappling with problems, an exhaustion, a slow steady decline, a stiffening of the fibres, a hardening of the arteries, a dying down of creative forces.

The civilization which we have developed is not exempt from the law of change. Whether it will rise or fall depends not on the stars above but on ourselves. Civilization is a human creation, the triumph of man's mind and will. Take the atomic revolution. It is a vast human effort, a conscious exploitation of new power acquired by scientific skill and ideals. It is of man's making. History is not fate. There are real alternatives. We can make choices, right or wrong. The great technological revolution can lead to abundance for all and peace, if we are wise; to the extinction of all hope and all life, if we are unwise. What prevents the realization of the dream of ages, *lokasamgraha*, is our outmoded methods and loyalties. We know our predicament. When man becomes aware of his destiny, destiny ends and man comes into his own and takes charge of his future.

This Organization, at any rate, knows what is wrong with us. This awareness, if intense, can help us to shape our future according to our heart's desire. There are certain essential steps which all

States should take.

They must give up their faith in military methods with which they have grown up for centuries. We seem still to adhere to the same doctrine, for the advanced nations feel that they will not be respected unless they are able to make the hydrogen bomb. There is a hideous rivalry among the Powers in this matter and each one is trying to demonstrate to others that she is leading in the race for making these weapons. They forget that the conditions of warfare have so altered that there is not much difference today between defeat and victory. There is no such thing as winning a thermo-nuclear war. It will be tragic folly for any nation to start a nuclear war, for it means mutual annihilation and yet we are continuously making these diabolic weapons and spreading dark clouds of fear over mankind. We deceive ourselves if we imagine that their very destructiveness will impel us to give up their use. More dreadful than hate is fear. A nation dreading that a hostile State might first employ these weapons might use them in the hope that it would thereby avert its own destruction. Let us clearly understand that in preparing nuclear weapons we are compromising with delusion. If war has a future, human society has none: if human society has a future, war has no future.

Nationalism should be subordinated to world loyalty. Mo Tzu, a Chinese thinker of fifth century B.C., describes the troubled condition of China of his time in words which are not irrelevant to our present predicament. A thief loves his own family and, for the sake of his love, he thinks that he can ruin and

cheat other families. A noble loves his clan and feels justified in misusing and exploiting other clans. A feudal baron loves his estate and feels justified in abusing other barons. Today, the Nation state has taken hold of us. Nationalism is a useful force so long as it inspires high ideals of duty, devotion to common welfare and sacrifice for a common good. But if it leads us to wrong paths, if it makes us feel that our country should be supported whether it is right or wrong, it deserves to be condemned. We have reached a stage when nationalism is not enough. Our needs and problems are of the twentieth century. Our loyalty should be to humanity as a whole. We must be able to feel it does not matter if our national interests suffer so long as humanity can be saved thereby. We must not allow our nationalist allegiances to disrupt the spiritual unity of the world.

We must cast off pride and egoism, individual and collective. The root evil in human history is pride, that we are the chosen people called upon by Providence to educate others to our way of life. According to the Greek poets, *hubris*, the insolence of pride, is the root of all tragedy, personal as well as national. It is the nemesis of pride that brought down the Pharaohs of Egypt, the rulers of Greece, the emperors of Persia, the Caliphs of Baghdad, the Popes of Mediaeval Rome. It is not necessary to mention more recent examples. Only the arrogant believe that they have enough wisdom and virtue to rule the rest. The pride which apes humility is most dangerous. Providence has a way of teaching those who persist long and wilfully in ignoring great realities, the dignity of man, the sense of human equality and the

right of all people to freedom.

We need today a sense of humility. We should give up the attitude that we are right and our opponents wrong or the attitude that we know we are not perfect but we are certainly better than our enemies. We seem to have become callous by years of mass-slaughter, hardened to horror. There is a great deal of barbarism in the most advanced nations and much of civilization in the backward peoples. Once upon a time civilizations were destroyed by barbarians from without; in our age they are likely to be destroyed by barbarians from within whom we breed. A moral revolution to match the technological revolution has to be effected. We must develop new human relationships, foster intellectual solidarity and moral unity among nations. Governments should develop a heart and a conscience, a feeling that we are all members of a brotherhood that knows no race or class.

If a sense of world loyalty is to be promoted, we must learn to appreciate other traditions of life. This country has for long been the meeting-point of many cultures, the Aryan and the Dravidian, the Hindu and the Buddhist, the Jewish and the Zoroastrian, the Moslem and the Christian. Now that the world is shrinking, the history of all races and cultures should become our object of study. If we wish to know one another better, we must give up our isolationism and superiority and accept that the standpoints of other cultures are as valid and their influence as powerful as our own. In this crucial moment of the history of mankind, we require a reorientation of human nature. We appreciate, in

this connection, the valuable work which UNESCO is doing for East-West understanding.

Even today, we have unrest and strife in Eastern Europe, West Asia, in Africa. When the danger of involving the world in another great war is not altogether past, let us act with humility and dispassion. We must show that even nations are capable of unselfish conduct as individuals sometimes are. The battle for the future must be won in the minds and hearts of men. Let each one of us develop an understanding mind and a contrite heart. I assure you that then wars between nations will become as obsolete as duels between individuals.

## **An Attitude of Spirit, a Way of Life**

**P**EOPLE distinguish Asia from Europe by emphasizing the religious bent of the Asian mind and the scientific character of the European mentality. This distinction is sought to be supported by the fact that almost all the living faiths of the world arose in Asia and the marvellous scientific achievements which are the pride of modern civilization are mainly the outcome of the intellectual enterprise and penetration of the Western mind. If we take a longer view, we will find that there are great religious geniuses in the West as there are eminent scientists in the East. In his Inaugural Address which Lord Acton gave at Cambridge as Regius Professor of Modern History on June 11, 1895, he said: 'We can found no philosophy on the observation of four hundred years, excluding three thousand. It would be an imperfect and fallacious induction.'

Religion and science, faith and reason represent different sides of human nature. Each one of us is both religious and scientific. At best it is a matter of the distribution of emphasis. With this proviso, I should like to refer briefly to the spirit of this ancient land, which is both old and young, the spirit which has dominated many parts of the East and some of the West. Angkor Vat, Borobudur and many

other remains are our claim to recognition, our contribution to civilization. India is a frame of mind, an attitude of spirit, a way of life. Its religion at its best is scientific and secular, political and spiritual. How does it view life?

1. In the cosmic evolution which has moved from matter to life, from life to animal mind, animal mind to human intelligence, the next step is the growth of human intelligence to spiritual freedom. Our intellectual consciousness should become an illumined consciousness. While in the sub-human levels, the movement has been automatic or instinctive, at the human level growth can be achieved only by conscious and deliberate effort.

2. Man is a free being, *svatantraḥ kartā*. The agent is independent. There is the spark of spirit in each individual. It is the presence of spirit that gives dignity to human nature, that is the basis of democracy, that is the justification for the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

3. The Orphics say that we are the children of earth and of the starry heaven. Man is a mixture of earth and heaven, of dust and deity. The spirit in us is wrapped up in many non-spiritual layers. If we are lost in the series of objective happenings man's freedom is unmanifested. The subject becomes an object, mindless, unthinking, unfeeling. If man recovers his subjectivity, his inwardness, he is able to control the non-spiritual and use it for spiritual ends. There is no opposition between spirit and nature. Nature can be controlled by spirit.

The purpose of religion is to help us to discipline our whole being, body, mind, heart and will. By prayer,

meditation and self-control we integrate our personality.

4. The integrated personalities, whatever religions they may profess, whatever races they may belong to, are members of a single family. All those who get to the mountain tops reach out to the stars. Such a religion is not exclusive or monopolist in character. If we get behind the social machinery, rites and customs, food habits and marriage codes, we will find that the emphasis is on spiritual awakening, moral rebornness. All religions are intertwined at the roots and meet at the summit.

5. India has had a universality of outlook from the beginning of her history. The R̥g Veda tells us that 'the loving sage beholds that mysterious Reality wherein the universe comes to have one home.'<sup>1</sup>

*bhrātaro manuṣās sarve svadeśo bhuvana-trayaṃ.*

All men, white and black, Hindu and Muslim, Christian and Jew are brothers and our native home is the three worlds. We should revere the things which are beyond the scope of discursive knowledge, about which it is difficult to speak. Our hopes for mankind as a whole were based on the reverence they had for other people's views. There should be no attempt to impose one's views on others. There is a well-known verse which says:

*uttaram yat samudrasya himādreś caiva dakṣiṇam  
varṣam tad bhāratam nāma bhāratī yatra saṃtatiḥ.*

<sup>1</sup>*venas tat paśyan nihitām guhā sad yatra viśvam bhavaty  
eka-niḍum.*

When men of different religious persuasions assemble in this country, the spiritual leaders of the country would teach the different people their own traditions and train them in their codes of moral behaviour: *svaṁ svaṁ caritraṁ śikṣeran*.<sup>1</sup> The *Bhagavadgītā* tells us not to engender confusion in people's minds simply because we feel they are ignorant and attached to work.

*na buddhi-bhedam janayed ajñānām karmasanginām*

India did not adopt the philosophy of either. Life surmounts all contradictions not by destroying them but by weaving them into a larger, more inclusive pattern. This outlook has resulted in the peaceful co-existence of different religions in India which influence each other, though this tradition has been seriously disturbed on occasions by the proselytizing activities of certain religions.

The secular character of the Indian State emphasizes the respect which it accords to all religions which have found a home in this country. India often deviated from it and suffered as a result.

The moral and spiritual values of our civilization may possibly serve as the basis for a larger human fellowship.

Progress is not inevitable, raising human generation to new heights of wisdom and virtue. Man is capable of evil as he is capable of good.

There is nothing inevitable about the future. We

<sup>1</sup>Manu says:

*etad deśa prasūtasya sakāśād agra-jammanah  
svaṁ svaṁ caritraṁ śikṣeran prthivyāṁ sarvamanāvaḥ.*

do not agree with determinists like Spengler who observes that 'the history of a culture is the exact counterpart of the history of an individual being or of an animal or of a tree or of a flower'. Historical events are not like physical or biological happenings. In them natural conditions and spiritual forces interact. Freedom and necessity are embraced in a vital union, a living whole. Whether we will plunge into disaster or climb to heights undreamed of depends on us. John Dewey declares: 'All I know about the future of progress is that it depends upon man to say whether he wants it or not.'<sup>1</sup> No other destiny awaits mankind than that which it prepares for itself by its intellectual and ethical discipline.

Among the new forces which are shaping, nay altering the course of human history, the most significant is the discovery of the ways of releasing forces locked up in the nuclei of atoms. This new power can be used for good or evil. Many who see the glaring contrast between the technical advance we have made and the puerility, vulgarity, crudity and narrowness of our minds are filled with despair. We made atom bombs and used them in the last war. Hydrogen bombs have been made and could be used in another war. Scientists tell us that even nuclear tests will condemn unknown and unborn generations to abnormalities, mutilation, torture, disease and early death. The bombs which we have already in stock are enough to end life on this planet. Man's ability to destroy himself is almost complete.

Mankind is on trial. The contrast between our intellectual power and our immoral deeds has

<sup>1</sup>Joseph Ratner, *The Philosophy of John Dewey*, p. 461.

depressed thinking and sensitive people all over the world. Shortly before his death, H. G. Wells wrote: 'A frightful queerness has come into life. Hitherto events have been held together by a certain logical consistency as the heavenly bodies have been held together by the golden cord of gravitation. Now it is as if the cord had vanished, and everywhere is driven anyhow, anywhere at a steadily increasing velocity. The writer is convinced that there is no way out, or around, or through the impasse. It is the end.'<sup>1</sup>

H. G. Wells wrote before the latest developments in nuclear weapons. The great psychologist, Carl Gustav Jung tells us: 'Misguided development of the soul must lead to psychic mass destruction. The present situation is so sinister that one cannot suppress the suspicion that the Creator is planning another deluge that will finally exterminate the existing race of man.'

In Philip Toynbee's book, *The Fearful Choice* the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. Fisher, declares that for all he knows 'it is within the providence of God that the human race should destroy itself, with nuclear weapons. He says that there was no evidence that the human race was to last for ever and there was plenty of evidence in the Christian scriptures to the contrary effect.'<sup>2</sup>

When moral passions are armed with nuclear weapons, we have a frightful combination and we

<sup>1</sup>*The Mind at the End of its Tether*, pp. 4-5.

<sup>2</sup>Canon R. J. Collins of St. Paul's Cathedral said that 'it may be in the providence of God that we should blow ourselves up but this does not excuse me or the Archbishop, if we condoned an evil policy, such as reliance upon nuclear weapons to defend our way of life.'

are likely to revert not to the teaching of the compassionate Buddha or the suffering Christ but to the injunctions of the tribal God of whom it is said that he ordered his people to destroy their enemies ruthlessly. 'Spare them not, but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass.' This is what happened when Hiroshima, a city of 300,000 inhabitants was obliterated on 6th August, 1945, and a third of its people killed and many injured. War has become more barbarous, more destructive and more debasing than ever before.

It is no answer to this dreadful possibility that we should stop scientific advance in nuclear physics. These scientific achievements are the result of our rational endowment and a part of human evolution. The search for new knowledge cannot be stopped. We have to try new ideas, new ways of life. We must make the most of our possibilities, if we are not to give place to others.

The extinction of humanity will not be the result of impersonal forces or supernatural plans. If it happens, it will be the direct result of man's obstinacy and pride, what the Greeks called *hybris*, undisciplined love of power which have made ugly many pages of human history.

There is no need to give up hope or lose faith. We have to be creative and courageous, buoyed up by the light and love at the heart of the universe. The new world of peace, freedom and safety for all can be achieved only by those who are moved by great spiritual ideals. It is the only way to live a coherent and meaningful life in the midst of this great upheaval. What is wanted is not knowledge

but charity. If our best plans miscarry, if our conferences end in deadlocks or stalemates, or communiques exchange invectives, it is because they are in the hands of people who have not suffered an inner growth. As individuals we are more humane, more compassionate than before. There is a great deal of disinterested kindness but as members of groups we are not equally unselfish or disinterested. We are filled with obsessions about ourselves and frenzied hatred of those who differ from us. Unless we remake ourselves, all our external triumphs will not help us. What we need is not better organization but a change in direction and outlook. We may be members of the United Nations Organization but we cannot succeed so long as we are dominated by nationalistic idolatry and power politics. Our minds are confused, split, fragmented. We should have no illusion about the blindness of human nature and the malice of the world. The self is divided. It would do the good but does not do it; it would avoid the evil but is inclined by an impulse more powerful than its will toward the evil which it would avoid.<sup>1</sup> We pray for peace but foster strife. If in the case of the individual it is wrong to put his self-interest above the nation, so also in the case of the nation it is wrong to put the national interest above the wider good of humanity.

Here religion in a non-dogmatic sense can be of great help. Our society, battered and distraught, may emerge into a new order if we do not defy the principle, 'Seek ye first the Kingdom of Heaven.'

<sup>1</sup>*jānāmi dharmam na ca me pravṛttiḥ  
jānāmi adharmam na ca me nivṛttiḥ.* See also *Romans VII.*

**The disease of the spirit can be cured only by the discipline of religion which requires us to adopt even in international relations the principle that we are members one of another. National leaders should envisage a larger good than the preservation of their own nations. Our minds and hearts require to be changed. We have to grow in human greatness, in humanity and goodwill.**

## National Unity and a New World Order

**N**ATIONAL integration is a problem with which our survival as a civilized nation is bound up. We take pride in our ancient civilization which is continuous and unbroken. It is said that civilized life began earlier in Egypt and Babylon but the links connecting the past with the present in these cases are completely snapped. No living memory of the Pharaohs or the Sumerians or their institutions survives. The basic concepts, metaphysical, moral and social, of Indian civilization are however still in use;<sup>1</sup> and they account for the staying power of Indian culture which has survived four millennia of nearly impossible historical conditions.

National feeling is sustained by the love of the land in which we live, the historical traditions we inherit and the hope for a common future. We remember the past, are alive to the present and work for the future.

India is a geographical fact. Geographically India is an expanse enclosed by seas and mountains, dotted

<sup>1</sup>Professor Basham says: 'The ancient civilization of India differs from that of Egypt, Mesopotamia and Greece, in that its traditions have been preserved without a breakdown to the present day... India and China have the oldest continuous cultural traditions in the world.' *The Wonder that was India* (1954), p. 4.

with dams on huge rivers, sprinkled with mines. All those who live in the area enclosed by the Himalayas in the north and the seas in the south are Indians whether they are Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs or Christians (*tad verṣam bhāratam nāma bhāratī yatra santatiḥ*). India is the motherland of all those who dwell in this area. People of diverse origins came into India and influenced her culture which is one, though varied in its manifestations. India was never wholly under the administrative control of any one monarch, though it came near to it in the periods of Aśoka, Samudragupta, Akbar. The British occupation gave to the whole of India administrative unity. Today our Republic extends from Kashmir to Kanya Kumari and from Kutch to Assam. The unity of India has been the ideal of the people across the centuries. The *Mahābhārata* says that all the peoples of India including those of the extreme south gathered together at the time of the Kurukṣetra war.

Vincent Smith says: 'India beyond all doubt possesses a deep underlying fundamental unity, far more profound than that produced either by geographical isolation or by political suzerainty. That unity transcends the innumerable diversities of blood, colour, language, dress, manners and sect.'<sup>1</sup> Behind the political contrivances and economic arrangements there are the cultural bonds. India has been the home of the spirit for the last forty centuries; and here the most amazing adventure of the human mind to evolve unity out of differences has been going on. Streams of people poured into the country from

<sup>1</sup>Vincent Smith, *The Oxford History of India*, Ed. by Percival Spear, 1958, p. 7.

places known and unknown, the Aryan and the Dravidian, the Sakas and the Hunas, the Pathans and the Moghuls.

From the beginning of our history India had been a multi-lingual, multi-racial and multi-religious society.<sup>1</sup> It has been the meeting place of various races and cultures.

India's historic mission has been to forge unity among different races of men, different religious beliefs not by obliterating them but by harmonizing them. Even a conservative legislator like Manu observes:

*etad<sup>2</sup>-deśa-prasūtaśya sakāśād agrajanmanah  
svaṁ svaṁ caritraṁ śikṣeran pṛthivyām sarvamānavāḥ*

All the people of the world will learn about their own traditions from the foremost teachers of this country. The Indian tradition is to acknowledge every faith and recognize value wherever it is found.<sup>3</sup> Our seer had an understanding of the significance of differences. The seers of the Upaniṣads, the Buddha and Mahāvīra, the Ācāryas, Rāmānanda, Kabīr, Nānak and more recently, Ramakrishna, Ram Mohun

<sup>1</sup>cf. *Kūrma Purāṇa*.

*bhārāteṣu striyaḥ puṁso nānāvārṇāḥ prakīrtiāḥ  
nānādevārcane yuktāḥ nānākarmāṇi kurvate.*

<sup>2</sup>another reading *asmat* for *etad*.

<sup>3</sup>cf. Qurān.

O ye mankind! Be mindful of your Lord who hath created you out of man created He, His mate, and from the twain Hath spread abroad so many Men and woman! And so, he Mindful of God in whose name you seek another relationship with one Another, and respect this Relationship.- -

Sura IV The Nisa  
Part 8.  
E.T. Maulana Abul  
Kalam Azad

Roy, Tagore and Gandhiji preached one God to all the peoples of India.

From the beginning of our history India has been striving to establish unity in diversity. In spite of many hindrances and misfortunes India has been striving to attain this goal. In the glorious periods of our history, we emphasized this principle of *sarva-dharma samanvaya*.

Aśoka, whose emissaries took Indian ideas into Asia Minor and influenced the Essenes and the growth of Christian doctrine, cut into rock the motto *samavāya eva sadhuḥ*. Concord alone is meritorious. The concept of Indian thought which filtered into the Roman empire flowed through channels opened by Alexander and Aśoka. The golden age of the Guptas ranging from A.D. 320 to 480, according to the testimony of Fa Hien who travelled in India from A.D. 401 to 410, was marked by absolute religious tolerance. The Gupta kings were devotees of Viṣṇu but gave Buddhists and Jains full freedom of worship and perfect liberty to endow their sacred places. King Harṣavardhana who ruled a large part of India from A.D. 606 to 647 was a devotee of Śiva but honoured the Sun-god and the Buddha. He held a conference of the representatives of different religions according to Bāṇā's *Harṣacarita*. Akbar, the greatest of the Moghul emperors, practised religious tolerance. He tried to establish 'principles of the widest toleration of opinion; of justice to all, irrespective of caste and creed; of alleviating the burdens on the children of the soil; of welding together the interests of all classes of the community, of the Rajput prince...of the Uzbek and the Moghul noble...of the settlers of

Afghan origin...of the indigenous inhabitants....'<sup>1</sup>

Intolerance and fanaticism marked the periods of our decline. We suffered when we became rigid and fanatical and prospered when we were tolerant and friendly. The misfortunes of our history teach us the need for the qualities of tolerance and goodwill.

*Ye may know each other  
Not that ye may despise each other.*

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Guru Granth Sahib in the spirit of the Indian tradition contains hymns from the Hindu and Muslim writings. A great Muslim saint Hazrat Mian Mir was invited to lay the foundation stone of the Golden Temple.

India is today the home of the living faiths of mankind and their followers live together in peace and friendship in spite of occasional setbacks and conflicts.

There is in man the aspiration to surpass himself, to outgrow himself, to know more, to love more. The spirit in us presses us forward. This impulse is said to be the root of religion but religions need not divide us. Whether we worship in the temple, pray in the mosque or kneel in the church, we are all members of God's household.

When it is said that our State is a secular one, it means that the State is not identified with any one faith but protects and respects all faiths so long as their followers do not behave in a way which is an outrage on moral conscience or a danger to the integrity of the country. Secularism attempts to remove

<sup>1</sup>Malleson, *Akbar* (1890), p. 171.

religious rivalries; it discourages the exploitation of religious beliefs for political purposes. Our Constitution gives freedom of worship to all, permits us to organize ourselves for religious purposes. It has abolished separate electorates and our election law provides that a systematic appeal to a voter on the ground of caste, race, community or religion is a corrupt practice for which a person elected may be disqualified.

The test of a true faith is the extent to which it transforms the individual and the social order. It must illuminate the dark places of our social life and religious practices. The Ṛg Veda says that the human race is one, *ekaiva mānuṣi jātiḥ*. All men are brothers: *bhrātaro mānavās sarve*. All religions teach that the human being is of infinite worth, and deserves respect and loving kindness, especially the unfortunate ones. Those who bear the deepest wounds require our greatest sympathy.

The code of conduct is called *dharma*: *dhāraṇāt ity ahuḥ*. What binds or holds together society is called *dharma*. Institutions and practices that lead to the disintegration of society require to be scrapped, however venerable their antiquity may be. The spiritual legacy of the past should be distinguished from the dead encumbrances. From the altar we should take the living fire and not the dead ashes.

Whatever might have been the historical basis for the development of the caste system, it has degraded the great ideal of the ancient Upaniṣads which affirm that the human individual as such is a spark of the spirit, a ray of the Divine. Yet we built stone walls separating peoples, exalting some as superior and

branding others as inferior. We crippled the minds of people and narrowed their lives. The taboos and restrictions of our society corrode and break the human spirit. Sometimes we defend our superstitions as the subtle expressions of profound wisdom. We must get rid of the self-deceptions in which we wrap ourselves. There are some who welcome atheism if it would cleanse our lives of corrupt practices. We should bridge gulfs and not widen them. We should break down the artificial fences which keep us separate. While caste is ceasing to be a social evil, it is becoming a political one, even an administrative one. For the sake of attaining political power or administrative control we utilize caste loyalties.

Untouchability is a great blot on the name of the faith we profess. There is nothing unclean or untouchable in the body of God which is humanity. Vedānta Deśika, a great Vaisṇava teacher, tells us:

*śvapaco'pi mahīpāla viṣṇubhaktō dvijādhikarī  
viṣṇu-bhakti vihīnas tu yatiś ca śvapacūdhmaḥ*

Character is the only patent of nobility. It does not matter who your parents are or what your race is. Our quality lies in our knowledge and deeds and not in our colour, faith, race or descent. We cannot condemn apartheid in other countries if we do not banish it from our hearts. If we do not establish equality among ourselves we cannot demand equality from others.

Great souls have come again to liberate us from the disabilities of caste and untouchability but we forget what they sought to do. We create sects and

coteries and fasten on ourselves the bonds from which they tried to liberate us.

Our Constitution disregards caste restrictions and makes the practice of untouchability a crime. Constitutional provisions are not enough. We should be trained to alter our habits of thought and modes of behaviour. If we wish to weld the different sections of our people into a single community with common objectives, the weaker links require to be strengthened.

Poverty and economic backwardness are not the monopoly of any caste, community, race or religion. There are poor people in all sections of our society. Some State Governments are now attempting to help all students whose parents and guardians do not have an income of more than Rs. 1,200 per annum. Education and economic opportunity are the great levellers. Universal, free and compulsory education for all the school-going children up to the age of fourteen and provision of stipends for all students of merit with inadequate means will help to integrate our society.

We aim at social justice. There is no other country in the world where the economic disparities are so wide and economic opportunities so lacking as in India. How can we say that the human individual is of great value when millions suffer from poverty, disease, illiteracy and a sense of hopelessness? There are so many, they ask for so little and yet they do not get even that little. Our Five Year Plans are attempts to raise the living standards of our people.

Regional imbalances leading to conflicts between the States and the Centre should be removed. Rapid

industrialization and balanced regional development will reduce the friction and emphasize the interdependence of States. The dispersal of heavy industries in different parts of the country is a step in the right direction. No one State is economically self-sufficient. The nation must be led along the path of planned and directed development. Regional rivalries should not be allowed to impede national progress. Economic integration will contribute to national unity.

We cannot build our country with brick and mortar or with hammer and chisel. It has to grow silently in the minds and hearts of our people. It should be taught to the youth in schools and colleges, proclaimed and practised by our leaders and worked into the texture of our national life. Education is not the mere imparting of information. It is the training of emotions. It should teach us ways of feeling and habits of behaviour. Our textbooks should emphasize the way in which our culture has grown from the time of Mohenjo-Dāro and Harappa down to our own time, how it has shown a power of self-renewal. Bad textbooks spoil the minds of the young, corrupt their tastes and degrade their nature. A sound system of education should give to the diversity of our country a certain unity of purpose and feeling.

The All India Radio is making a valuable contribution to the cultural integration of the country. The devotional music gives selections from the different religions and from different regions. Arts speak the language of friendship and understanding.

It is most unfortunate that the language issue has

given rise to much bitterness and controversy. Linguistic States have hardened and not softened linguistic differences. Languages different from those of the region flourished in different States. Tyāgarājā who wrote devotional songs in Telugu flourished in Tamilnadu. There were migrations from one linguistic area to others and did not cause ill will. Linguistic jealousies did not develop till our own times.

Our approach to the problem should not be doctrinaire; it should be pragmatic. The Constitution lays down that Hindi is the official language of India since it is spoken by a large number of people. In the post-Independence years Hindi has not become the language for inter-State communication. It is not used in the law courts or the universities. The States are anxious to use the regional languages in legislatures, courts and universities.

Mr. Nehru had said that English should continue as an associate official language till it was required. We had no prejudice against foreigners and their languages. The science of astrology was developed by the Greeks and we learnt a great deal from them. Garga says:

*mlecchā hi yavanās teṣu samyak śāstram idam sthitam  
rṣivat te'pi pījyante kiṁ punar daivavit dvijaḥ.*

The Yavanās are indeed *mlecchās* but their science has been well established among them. So even they are honoured like sages.

In a shrinking world where international organizations are playing an increasing part, adequate training in English for our university students is essential. The spread of sound education in science and

technology, which is very essential for our growth, should be secured and in the present conditions no Indian language can replace English as the medium of instruction in scientific, engineering and technological course, though in course of time the situation may be different. There are small countries, small in size, or numbers, though not in importance, like Canada, Belgium, Finland, Switzerland, Yugoslavia, South Africa, where there are two or more official languages.

In a multi-lingual, multi-religious society we should respect all languages even as we are called upon to appreciate all religions. Our attitude to other languages than our own should be one of understanding and sympathy.

Even as we propose to have in the Centre two official languages, some States, where necessary, may have two official languages. Article 347 of the Constitution makes special provision relating to the language spoken by a section of the population of any State:

On a demand being made in that behalf, the President may, if he is satisfied that a substantial proportion of the population of a State desires the use of any language spoken by them to be recognized by that State, direct that such language shall also be officially recognized throughout that State or any part thereof for such purpose as he may specify.

All India Services, wherever possible, should be established. About 75 per cent of the candidates selected on the results of the U.P.S.C. examination may be posted to the State to which they belong and the other 25 per cent to other States. Those posted to

outside States will be relatively free from regional pressures and will also make for national coherence.

Though efficiency should be the main consideration in the recruitment to the services, candidates should be recruited from all States and all communities.

We live today in one of the great transitional periods of history when a great reorganization of human society is taking place, when the barriers that kept humanity apart are breaking down. We are striving to build a new way of life which shall treat all men, whatever be their colour or creed, race or nationality, with dignity and respect. The problem of establishing a new world is an educational one, a slow process but yet the only process for our goal.

If we are to contribute to this great adventure we should ourselves be united and strong. Only then can we face other great powers on equal terms.

Geography, history, a common inheritance and economic objectives contribute to national integration. The security of our country depends not only on our industrial, agricultural and scientific strength but on our social cohesion and solidarity. Pervasive emotional urges and attitudes require to be developed. Our minds and hearts are to be reshaped. There is the tremendous resistance of man to new ways of thinking. All transitions belong to the realm of tragedy. A stagnant society is a dangerous one. True modernism is independence of mind and not slavery to the past. We cannot move forward if we are always looking backwards. History is not static; time is a great innovator. We have to fight social evils which are crippling our lives. Habits, prejudices, vested interests are to be broken down. Great issues

and small minds cannot go together. We need penetrating minds, creative ideals and a burning conscience. History is an interplay of leadership, opportunity and circumstance. For a nation to grow the people must have a knowledge of having worked together in the past and the will to work together in the future. We have the knowledge of having achieved in the past great things including the freedom of our country through co-operative effort. We have the will to work together for a greater future for our country. Let us dedicate ourselves to this task with courage and wisdom, faith and love.

## **Democracy is a Faith**

**I**NDIA won political freedom in 1947. That has been a simpler task compared with the one of administering the country in a clean, decent way. This seems to be a more formidable task. For it we require selfless leadership, and an honest and competent civil service. We require a disciplined military and police force. We require expert industrial managers and skilled workers and good agricultural peasants. Our ordinary citizens should have civic sense and national feeling. All these things cannot be had in a day. What we are attempting to do to the best of our power is to take some steps towards developing a sound administration, a stable government and a healthy nation. We cannot say that we are satisfied with what we have done. There are things happening in different parts of our country which make us feel sad, depressed and ashamed of ourselves. What is necessary is a strong sense of patriotism. It is true that we developed a negative kind of patriotism when we struggled to rid the country of foreign rule. But a positive patriotism, a dynamic fellow-feeling, a sense of belonging to this great country, of being proud to belong to it, these things are yet to come. We have to build these in the minds and hearts of men. We need to develop a sense of the great traditions for which this country

has stood for nearly forty or fifty centuries in spite of setbacks and blind alleys.

It is our desire to develop a democratic set-up in our society. Democracy has different sides to it. It is a political arrangement. It is an economic approach; it is an ethical way of life.

As a political arrangement we have adopted adult suffrage. Any individual who is of a particular age, whatever may be his literary qualifications, privileges or property, has a vote. One person one vote; we thus affirm the equality of all human beings. This principle is a part of our heritage. Each individual is a spark of the Divine, *deho devālayo nāma*. The body is the temple of God. Though we affirmed it we did not practise it consistently. If we were subjected to invasions and suffered many difficulties, it was because this religious proposition to which we pay allegiance has not entered the hearts of our people. Today political democracy cuts across the differences of class, caste, race and religion. Whatever these differences may be, they are irrelevant to the sanctity, the dignity of man as man. We should respect the human individual for his human nature, for his possibilities. Each human being is a potential candidate for the highest life.

It follows that we should enable all individuals to live a full, free, rich life. We must help to bring up the buried treasure in each individual without breaking any of it. For this, certain minimum cultural and economic conditions must be provided. That is why we have universal education as a target in our Constitution. We talk often of a socialistic pattern of society. This does not mean the regimentation of

the individual. In the drama of human evolution, the chief actors are the individuals, the individuals of genius. We should not allow the individuality of human beings to be crushed or even diminished by the assaults of science and technology, by the mechanization of life.

Socialism does not mean equalization of the abilities of all individuals. It is impossible. All men are not equal. Socialism means only the provision of equal opportunities for all. We do not say that all men are equal, but we do say that all men must be given equal opportunities for expressing whatever possibilities they have. When we say that it is necessary for us to feed, clothe and shelter all human beings, we are emphasizing what may be called the economic aspect of the democratic ideal. We wish to diminish the distances between wealth and poverty and to raise the living standards of the ordinary man. So long as there are people in our country who do not get a square meal a day, who sometimes do not have a roof over their heads, who sleep on the pavements of our cities, it is a challenge to us. No man who feels for his country can feel happy or complacent when he looks at this appalling misery and poverty. These are a challenge to us all. We should combat them, abolish them, if our country is to be called democratic.

Democracy is still an ideal. We are trying to put some social and economic content into it, and what is called the socialistic pattern of society is nothing more than a persistent and consistent attempt to give to all our people the wherewithal for keeping body and soul together. This is the economic aspect of

democracy.

To achieve economic democracy, we must increase our national wealth, our agricultural output and our industrial products. The Five Year Plans are intended to achieve these objectives. Our rural areas have been largely neglected, and they require to be developed. The Community Development projects aim at this rural reconstruction. Unfortunately we have not been able to rouse the enthusiasm of our people. The administrative machinery is somewhat unwieldy and participation in these projects by the people requires to be stimulated.

There is a more fundamental thing, the ethical approach. Democracy is a faith. Democracy asks us to adopt persuasion, restraint, consent in the settlement of our problems. Have we understood the implications of the principle that freedom means restraint? Wherever we have a quarrel, we resort to direct action. We are full of anger, we have violence; we exhibit passions and do not behave like human beings. When we emphasize the ethical character of democracy we mean that every human being has an element of rationality, that it is possible for us to appeal to it. We must believe that we may not always be right, our opponents may sometimes be right. We should be modest enough to believe that there may be some virtue in our opponents also. It is this sense of humility, this sense of restraint, that democracy imposes on us. It is our duty to understand and come to a reasonable settlement with them. Dissent is not reason; opposition is not rebellion. We must try to settle our problems with reason, without bitterness. Democracy and violent

action are inconsistent with each other. Whenever we have a conflict, we forget that our enemies are made of the same flesh and blood, are endowed with the same instincts and passions, hopes and aspirations. They do not belong to a different species of humanity.

It is a great misfortune not merely in this country but in many other countries that many feel that loss of face is a greater danger than the destruction of civilized values. There are many people who would stand on their prestige, stand on their honour, stand on some kind of dignity, when the life of humanity is at stake. When we find that we are face to face with problems of great magnitude affecting the future of humanity, what is necessary for us to understand is that time is a great healer. Human nature has an extraordinary power of resilience. Social and political institutions are subject to the same laws of mutation to which all other things in the world are subject. If we have faith in the resilience of human nature, the healing power of time, the mutability of social and political institutions and above all the goodwill of the people, the problems which divide us so fiercely today may appear to be purely academic after some time.

Before we tell the world to live in peaceful co-existence, we should settle the problems of our country in the same spirit. Example is better than precept. This is what we should attempt to do. We have problems staring us in the face, linguistic feuds, provincial jealousies, domestic quarrels. These have undermined our stability over the centuries; we do not seem to have learned anything from our past

history. The only lesson history teaches us is that we learn nothing from history. Time and again on account of our inconsistencies, on account of our feuds, our jealousies, our quarrels with neighbours we have lost our independence. We seem to be again falling apart.

Are we again going to be victims of the same separatist tendencies ? Should we not adopt more reasonable methods of settling the large questions which face us ? It has been said in our country for a very long time that the whole extent of territory south of the Himalayas and north of the seas is India, is *tad varṣaṁ bhārataṁ nāma, bnāratī yatra sanītatīḥ*. That country is called Bharat and all people who live in this geographical area, whatever may be their caste or creed, race or religion, are citizens of this country. That our nation is one and indivisible is what we are taught. That is why in our great days we were able to practise tolerance and understanding among the faiths. If today we forget those lessons and we exaggerate our group loyalties, the future is undoubtedly bleak.

Democracy is a political arrangement which treats people as equals. It is an economic approach which requires us to raise the economic condition of the masses of this country and of this world. It is an ethical way of life where we have to treat other people as friends, potentially friends of ours though at the moment they may happen to be our enemies. A defeated enemy remains an enemy and waits for his opportunity to wreak his vengeance. A reconciled foe becomes a friend. Hatred is the greatest danger. It is our greatest enemy. Our whole attitude should

be one of reconciliation. To make our country a truly democratic one, hard work, efficiency and organization are needed. When an American was shown a beautiful farm in the Middle West he exclaimed: 'Look, what magnificent work is possible if God and man co-operate.' The owner of the farm said: 'You should have seen the farm when God alone was running it.' God expects us to put in hard and honest work. He helps those who help themselves.

## A Divided Inheritance

**I**N recent years there have been great advances in sciences and technology and an increasing unification of the world. Ideas, political and economic, artistic and intellectual, are circulating over the whole world. Even before we have set our house on earth in order, we are conquering inter-planetary space.

Unfortunately, the horrors of war have increased and the refinements of cruelty to which human beings are subjected such as concentration camps, mass deportations, gas-chambers, atom bombs baffle description. Again in the past we lived in a world in which civilizations seemed remote from each other. Today, we are all a close neighbourhood. In view of these drastic changes which have occurred, the Red Cross Societies cannot any more confine themselves to the task of mitigating the horrors of war, but they should do their utmost to prevent war itself which in this age is a crime against humanity.

In Rock Edict XIII, Aśoka mentions that he conquered the Kalinga country (266 B.C.) in which 'one hundred and fifty thousand persons were carried away as captives, and one hundred thousand slain and many times that number died.' He felt remorse that this victory is no victory : *avijitaṃ hi vijitaṃ manye*. 'Now even the loss of a hundredth or a thousandth

part of all the lives that were killed or died or were carried away captive at the time when the Kalingas were captured is considered deplorable by the King.' He declares that he prefers forgiveness to punishment. The only conquest is conquest by Dharma : *tam eva ca vijayam manyantām yo dharma vijayah*. Though Asoka cut into rock his admonition, we have not adopted it seriously. Man's inhumanity to man came out in the bloody riots in the first year of our independence. We are still treating as sacred institutions which protect social injustices in the name of social justice. Our practices are far away from our professions.

We have now reached the end of the military road, but not, I hope, the limits of human wisdom. The preservation of peace is not merely a desirable ideal; it has become an imperative necessity. All the nations of the world have pledged their allegiance to peace, but do not seem to be prepared to work for the conditions which are essential for peace. We profess to build a world welfare state, where individual freedom and social justice are preserved, where we do not have injustices, racial discriminations and colonial dominations. We cannot achieve the goal of peace by bluffing, bargaining and bullying.

The two groups into which the world unfortunately is divided wish to build a social and political order which transcends sovereign nations. Both agree that exclusive nationalism is impracticable in the new world. But the conflicts between the methods adopted by the two groups are potentially violent, dark and destructive. They seem to be afraid of each other and each one thinks that the other is trying to

overthrow it by force. We are faced by two alternatives: (i) collision which may be suicidal for the human race, or (ii) conciliation which is our hope for the future. We are pledged to the latter.

Modern psychiatry tells us that it is no use becoming furious at people who behave stupidly or wickedly. Instead of losing our tempers with them, we should study the reasons for their behaviour. Perhaps it may be wise for us to adopt a similar attitude in regard to the cold war. Cruel methods are not necessary even to drive out cruelty.

The first step we have to take is to look upon our enemies as people like ourselves who are anxious to lead quiet, respectable lives. Plato was opposed to any naturalization of foreigners and wanted every foreign creed and usage to be kept out of the commonwealth. This view dominated European thought for centuries. History has failed to conform to what Plato desired. The crusading spirit that we must spread our way of life whatever be the cost or the consequences does not help us much. In the past quarrels tended to violence when each participant believed firmly and sincerely that he had the one final truth and if people differed from him it must be due to bad faith. Such an attitude led to persecution in the name of truth. The Greek and the Barbarian, the Jew and the Gentile, the Greek and the Christian, the Christian and the Muslim, the Catholic and the Protestant, the Allies and the Axis Powers have all fought one another in the name of the infallibility of their particular ways of life. The play goes on; only the actors change. Today it is a conflict between the Communists and the anti-Communists. History

demonstrates that the Greeks and the Barbarians, the Jews and the Gentiles, the Christians and the Pagans, the Christians and the Muslims, the Protestants and the Catholics have influenced each other, helped each other and enriched the world. The whirligig of time brings about its surprises. The Allied and Axis Powers who fought with such bitterness a few years ago are great friends today. It is not necessary for the Communist and anti-Communist powers to wade through blood before they can settle down and understand each other. History shows that time cures many ills and brings about reconciliations which previously seemed impossible. The healing power of time, the resilience of human nature and the mutability of social and political institutions may help us to resolve the present conflicts if we avoid absolutism in creed and conduct and develop the courage to be patient and long suffering.

We are yet in an early hour of the morning of man's history. His civilized life is hardly ten thousand years old and even in that period many empires and civilizations have appeared and disappeared and we need not think that our civilization is the final expression of human wisdom. If we believe in the moral government of the world, this civilization will survive if it adheres to the principles of love and brotherhood. It will disappear if it does not conform to them. When a member of the Prohibition Committee inserted advertisements for liquor in his newspaper, Gandhi asked: 'What are you doing?' He answered: 'I must live.' Gandhi replied: 'I do not see any necessity.' Even so there is no 'must' about the survival of any civilization. We have a common

origin and a common goal as members of the human race. Every nation belongs to the world. Gandhi said : 'My love, therefore of nationalism or my idea of nationalism is that my country may become free, that, if need be, the whole country may die so that the human race may live.' The Cross symbolizes material suffering and death and spiritual victory. 'He that loseth his life shall save it.' For the sake of physical survival, we should not barter away spiritual ideals. It is far more noble to die than spread death and disease among millions of innocent people. If, on the other hand, we adopt the teachings of great religions which require us to forgive, love and pray for our enemies, we will lay the foundations for a better world.

The establishment of peace is not simply an intellectual achievement. It is a moral and spiritual one. At the present moment we have the Red Cross work on the one hand and nuclear tests on the other. We commend to our people the message of love and non-violence and prepare, at the same time, horrible instruments which cause death and destruction. We offer the people a divided inheritance. We can make war, can we make peace? Yes, if we overcome the division in our hearts. We suffer from confused minds, disturbed hearts and sick souls. Until we are delivered from this bondage, this corruption, this division in our soul, we may have to groan and travail.

In the first world war when Church leaders were persuading young men to join the forces, Professor G.E. Moore of Trinity College, Cambridge, and the doyen of British philosophers, suggested that chapel service should be banned in Trinity since the precept

'Love your enemies' was obviously subversive. Socrates says, according to Plato's *Crito*: 'We must not do injustice, nor must we do evil to anyone, whatever evil we may have suffered from him.' The Hindu and the Buddhist, the Jew and the Zoroastrian, the Christian and the Muslim at their best teach compassion and this teaching is subversive of our social order which believes in the massing of might for defending national security. What happens in the world is a reflection of what happens in our souls. Each one of us has two possibilities, one for good, the other for evil. We must develop the positive side. Man is not called into being to annihilate himself and others. To save lives is more thrilling than to destroy them. Across the centuries the sages have spoken to us about the need for love. Love is the health of the soul, its beauty and well-being; hate is the disease of the soul, its deformity and weakness. We can live without hatred and envy, without false ambitions, without high-pressure competitions, without becoming slaves to the seduction of power. This requires a new pattern of living, a pattern which will unite the peoples of the world and not divide them. There are men and women in all countries who are ready to serve this adventurous task of high purpose.

The present time is of crucial importance in the history of mankind. We are in the beginning of a new age. There is no need for despair. It is time for hope and hard work. Each one of us should see that his influence is for good. It is possible only if we remake ourselves. We have heard a great deal about *pañcaśīla*. The original *pañcaśīla* refers to self-

cleansing, self-changing:

1. The first is *ahimsā* or reverence for life and respect for fellowmen. We should not inflict sorrow and suffering consciously. We must not take the life of any living creature unnecessarily.

2. The second is *alobhā*. We should not be greedy for other people's possessions. We should not be attracted by the love of power. The evangelist tells us how 'the devil taketh him up unto an exceeding high mountain and showeth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them: and saith unto him, "All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me".' Then saith Jesus unto him, 'Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God and Him alone shalt thou serve'.<sup>1</sup>

3. The third is *brahmacarya*, or self-control. We cannot govern others unless we learn to govern ourselves. *Brahmacarya* is the acquisition of a balanced view. There is a danger in these troublous time of becoming possessed with hysterical fear of what might come to pass. Ancient advice is: 'See that you be not troubled, do not get unduly excited.' We are asked to acquire the peace, the peace of the man of serene, calm and balanced mind.

4. The fourth is *satya vacana* or speaking the truth. We should not deviate from truth even for the sake of pleasing those in power. We must speak the truth without fear and without malice and speak it even to people who do not wish to hear it. If our Government does something wrong we must be prepared to own it. Science is the disinterested

<sup>1</sup>Matthew, IV. 8-10; Luke IV. 5-8.

pursuit of truth. Unfortunately the pursuit of science today is not so much the result of a desire to know more about the structure of the world we live in as the product of the fear that other countries may surpass us. Scientific discoveries are treated as so much strategic material and the scientific tradition of universality is subordinated to the interests of national security. Pericles, according to Thucydides, in his Funeral Oration said: 'We throw open our City to the world and never by alien acts exclude foreigners from any opportunity of learning or observing, although the eyes of an enemy may occasionally profit by our liberality, trusting less in system and policy than to the native spirit of our citizens.' In this spirit a great American President declared that error need not be suppressed so long as truth is free to combat it.

5. The last is *surā-pāna-niṣedha*, or abstinence from intoxicating drinks. This advice refers also to the freedom from dogmas and doctrines which are vicious poisons. They fetter our minds and make us ill and unbalanced. Even as we do not feed children with opium and alcohol we should not educate the youth in partisan and provincial creeds.

These five principles are intended to develop in us wisdom, humility and selflessness. Life may become a blessing or a curse. What it will turn out depends on us.

## **Character is Destiny**

**T**HE times ahead of us are of a very difficult character. The movements which took place in other countries during a span of centuries have all occurred here more or less simultaneously. What answer to the Renaissance, the Reformation, the Industrial Revolution or the Political Revolution—all those things have been telescoped, so to say, in these few years in our country. If we wish to follow up political revolution by a social and economic one, our universities must send out batches of scientists, technicians, engineers, agriculturists, etc. These are essential for changing the face of our country, the economic character of our society. But we should not believe that science and technology alone are enough.

There are other countries, much advanced countries, in the world, which have achieved marvellous progress in scientific and technological side, but yet they are torn by strife and they are unable to bring about peace, safety and security of their own people. It only shows that other qualities are also necessary besides those developed by science and technology.

Science is also regarded as a branch of philosophy. The function of the universities is not merely to send out technically skilled and professionally competent men, but it is their duty to produce in them the quality

of compassion, the quality which enables the individuals to treat one another in a truly democratic spirit. Our religions have proclaimed from the very beginning that each human individual is to be regarded as a spark of the Divine. *Twat tam asi*, that art thou, is the teaching of the Upaniṣads. The Buddhists declare that each individual has in him a spark of the Divine and could become a *Bodhisattva*. These proclamations by themselves are not enough. Minds and hearts of the people require to be altered. We must strive to become democratic not merely in the political sense of the term but also in the social and economic sense. It is essential to bring about this democratic change, this democratic temper, this kind of outlook by a proper study of the humanities including philosophy and religion. There is a great verse which says that in this poison tree of *samsāra* are two fruits of incomparable value. They are the enjoyment of great books and the company of good souls. If we want to absorb the fruits of great literature, we must read them, read them not as we do cricket stories but read them with concentration. Our generation in its rapid travel has not achieved the habit of reading the great books and has lost the habit of being influenced by the great classics of our country. If these principles of democracy in our Constitution are to become habits of mind and patterns of behaviour, principles which change the very character of the individual and the nature of the society, it can be done only by the study of great literature, of philosophy and religion. That is why even though our country needs great scientists, great technologists, great engineers, we should not neglect

to make them humanists. While we retain science and technology we must remember that science and technology are not all. We must note the famous statement that merely by becoming literate without the development of compassion we become demoniac. So no university can regard itself as a true university unless it sends out young men and women who are not only learned but whose hearts are full of compassion for suffering humanity. Unless that is there the university education must be regarded as incomplete.

Character is destiny. Character is that on which the destiny of a nation is built. One cannot have a great nation with men of small character. If we want to build a great nation, we must try to train a large number of young men and women who have character. We must have young men and women who look upon others as the living images of themselves, as our *Śāstras* have so often declared. But whether in public life or in student life, we cannot reach great heights if we are lacking in character. We cannot climb the mountain when the very ground at our feet is crumbling. When the very basis of our structure is shaky, how can we reach the heights which we have set before ourselves? We must all have humility.

Here is a country which we are interested in building up. For whatever service we take up, we should not care for what we receive. We should know how much we can put into that service. That should be the principle which should animate our young men and women. Ours is a great country. We have had for centuries a great history. The whole of the East reflects our culture. We have to represent what India

taught right from the time of Mohenjo-Dāro and Harappa. Whether in domestic affairs or in international affairs we must adhere to certain standards. My advice to the young men and women: Mother India expects of you that your lives should be clean, noble, and dedicated to selfless work.

## **An Ideal before the Youth**

**I**T is a matter for great sorrow that there is not among our youth that sense of exhilaration, that release of energy, that buoyancy of spirit that characterize great liberation movements. Many of us do not realize how radically our position in the world has altered. Political freedom has given us the great opportunity and the sacred responsibility of building up a new India free from want and disease, rid of the curse of the caste and the outcaste, where women will enjoy the same rights as men and where we shall live at peace with the rest of the world. The inspiration of such an India will sustain us in our work ahead.

We are living through one of the great revolutionary periods in human history. The revolutionary efforts, spread over several centuries in other parts of the world, are concentrated in a short span of time in our country. We are facing a many-sided challenge, political and economic, social and cultural. Education is the means by which the youth is trained to serve the cause of drastic social and economic changes. Nations become back numbers if they do not reckon with the developments of the age.

The industrial growth of our country requires a large number of scientists, technicians and engineers. The rush in our universities for courses in science and

technology is natural. Men trained in these practical courses help to increase productivity, agricultural and industrial. They also hope to find employment easily. To help the students to earn a living is one of the functions of education, *arthakrī ca vidyā*.

I do not believe that scientific and technological studies are devoid of moral values. Science is both knowledge and power. It has interest as well as utility. It is illuminating as well as fruitful. It demands disciplined devotion to the pursuit of truth. It develops in its votaries an attitude of tolerance, open-mindedness, freedom from prejudice and hospitality to new ideas. Science reveals to us the inexhaustible richness of the world, its unexpectedness, its wonder.

Nevertheless, these qualities are developed by science incidentally and not immediately. It does not directly deal with the non-intellectual aspects of human nature. Economic man who produces and consumes, the intellectual man, the scientific man is not the whole man. The disproportionate emphasis on science and technology has been causing concern to thinking men all over the world. The great crimes against civilization are committed not by the primitive and the uneducated but by the highly educated and the so-called civilized. One recalls the saying that the most civilized State is not farther from barbarism than the most polished steel is from rust. Scientists have now found means by which human life can be wiped off the surface of this planet. Of the many problems that now face the leaders of the world, none is of graver consequence than the problem of saving the human race from extinction. Struggling as we

are with the fateful horizons of an atomic age, the achievements of science have induced in our minds a mood of despair making us feel homeless exiles caught in a blind machine. We are standing on the edge of an abyss or perhaps even sliding towards it. A former Prime Minister of England contemplated: 'We and all nations stand at this hour in human history before the portals of supreme catastrophe and measureless reward. Our faith is that in God's mercy we shall choose aright, in which case the annihilating character of these agencies may bring unutterable security to the human mind. To choose aright requires the cultivation of the heart and the intelligence. Escape from decline and catastrophe depends not on scientific ideas and material forces but on the perceptions and ideas of men and women, on the moral judgements of the community. If we choose rightly, the achievements of science may lead to such a degree of material wealth and abundance of leisure as has never before been possible in human history. All this will be possible only if we achieve a revolution in the inner compulsions that control us.

Any satisfactory system of education should aim at a balanced growth of the individual and insist on both knowledge and wisdom, *jñānam vijñāna-sahitam*. It should not only train the intellect but bring grace into the heart of man. Wisdom is more easily gained through the study of literature, philosophy, religion. They interpret the higher laws of the universe. If we do not have a general philosophy or attitude of life, our minds will be confused, and we will suffer from greed, pusillanimity, anxiety and defeatism. Mental slums are more dangerous to mankind than

**material slums.**

**Independent thinking is not encouraged in our world today. When we see a cinema, we think very fast to keep up with rapid changes of scene and action. This rapidity which the cinema gives its audiences and demands from them has its own effect on the mental development. If we are to be freed from the debilitating effects and the nervous strain of modern life, if we are to be saved from the assaults which beat so insistently on us from the screen and the radio, from the yellow press and demagoguery, defences are to be built in the minds of men, enduring interests are to be implanted in them. We must learn to read great classics which deal with really important questions affecting the life and destiny of the human race. We must think for ourselves about these great matters but thinking for oneself does not mean thinking in a vacuum, unaided, all alone. We need help from others, living or dead. We need help from the great of all ages, the poets, 'the unacknowledged legislators of the world', the philosophers, the creative thinkers, the artists. Whereas in sciences we can be helped only by the contemporaries, in the humanities, help comes from the very great, to whatever age and race they may belong. At the deepest levels of existence, in the intimations of the nature of the Supreme, and the economy of the universe, in the insights into the power and powerlessness of man, the changing scene of history has its focus. The events of history reflect the events in the souls of men.**

**If this country has survived all the changes and chances it has passed through, it is because of certain habits of mind and conviction which our people,**

whatever their race or religion may be, share and would not surrender. The central truth is that there is an intimate connection between the mind of man and the moving spirit of the universe. We can realize it through the practice of self-control and the exercise of compassion. These principles have remained the framework into which were fitted lessons from the different religions that have found place in this country. Our history is not modern. It is like a great river with its source back in silence. Many ages, many races, many religions have worked at it. It is all in our blood stream. The more Indian culture changes, the more it remains the same. The power of the Indian spirit has sustained us through difficult times. It will sustain us in the future if we believe in ourselves. It is the intangibles that give a nation its character and its vitality. They may seem unimportant or even irrelevant under the pressure of daily life. Our capacity for survival in spite of perils from outside matched only by our own internal feuds and dissensions is due to our persistent adherence to this spirit. If our young men are to live more abundantly, they should enter more fully into the experience and ideals of the race, they should be inspired in their minds and hearts by the great ideas enshrined in our culture.

Inattention to our culture in our universities is to no small extent responsible for the increasing unrest among students. In recent weeks the lawless activities of some students in some parts of the country filled us with shame and sorrow and I have had occasion to refer to them and tell the students that by these acts of defiance of authority, they do a national

disservice and imperil the future of the country, that they are traitors to the past and enemies of the future. Students are not trained to approach life's problems with the fortitude, self-control and sense of balance which our new conditions demand. Without this disciplined enthusiasm for great causes, students become a danger to themselves and to society as a whole. This approach is encouraged by a study of our classics.

A university is essentially a corporation of teachers and students. The relations between the two have been of a sacred character. The kind of education that we provide for our youth is determined overwhelmingly by the kind of men and women we secure as teachers. Magnificent buildings and equipment are no substitute for the great teacher. Every attempt should be made to draw a good proportion of the best ability in the country into the teaching profession. If this country is to participate in the march of mind in science and scholarship, universities must recruit for their staff some of the best minds of the country. The university teacher should be helped to live in comfort, if he is to devote himself to learning, teaching and research. As the young recruits to the universities are paid low salaries, they fail to appreciate intellectual values and get interested in writing textbooks or obtaining examinerships. As the example of the teacher has great influence on the pupils, we cannot evade our responsibility to the teaching profession. A more enlightened public attitude is essential to achieve this objective.

Besides, our colleges have increased their numbers regardless of the fact that competent teachers are not

employed to deal with these increased numbers. It is impossible for the students to get adequate academic tuition or moral guidance. Some of the educational institutions have become commercialized and adopt the shift system as in the factories. If the results are unfortunate, we have ourselves to blame. There is nothing wrong with our students. What is wrong is the system.

Our future destiny as a nation depends on our spiritual strength rather than upon our material wealth: *nāyam ātmā balahīnena labhyaḥ*. The goal of perfection cannot be achieved by the weak, not the weak in body, but the weak in spirit, *ātma-niṣṭhā-janita-vīryahīnena*. The greatest asset of a nation is the spirit of its people. If we break the spirit of a people, we imperil their future: if we develop the power of spirit, our future will be bright.

*prasāraya dharma-dhavam  
prapūraya dharma śankham  
pratāḍaya dharma-dundubhim  
dharmam kuru, dharmam kuru,  
dharmam kuru.*

Good teachers who are interested in the welfare of the students, who have enthusiasm for their subjects and are able to impart it to the pupils—they form the central framework of a university. Our commercial-minded generation reserves its respect for those who make money and so the best ability is drawn into administration, business and the learned professions. We have to realize that the kind of education we provide for our children is determined

overwhelmingly by the kind of men and women we secure as teachers. The low esteem in which teachers are held is the most eloquent evidence of the malady from which our society suffers. We must get the right type of men for the teaching profession, and not the incompetent and the unambitious. Respect for the teachers cannot be ordered. It must be earned.

The next few years will be a testing time, more severe and more exacting than we have known for many years. Political freedom which we won at much cost and sacrifice is only an opportunity. It is not a fulfilment. If we are to develop a strong democracy, political, social and economic, it is necessary for us to work hard and work unitedly. The ideal imposes on us a sacred responsibility. Men are not made democratic by the mere formulation of ideals in the Constitution. They are not made good by mere exhortation. Great ideals of justice, equality, fraternity and freedom which we have inscribed in our Constitution must be woven into the social fabric. We must apply them to the myriad situations of our daily life. Unfortunately, the state of mind in which we found ourselves at the time of political liberation is not marked by revolutionary fervour. The spirit of enjoyment has prevailed over the spirit of sacrifice. We seem to demand more than what we give. There is much evidence of low morale, dissatisfaction and discontent among people, all leading to serious slackness. We must overcome the spiritual sickness which seems to be enfeebling our community. If we do not change our minds, we cannot change anything.

A nation is built in its educational institutions. We have to train our youth in them. We have to impart

to them the tradition of the future. Through all the complexities and diversities of race and religion, language and geography, the forces which have made our people into a nation and which alone can keep them one are being shaped. These do not belong to the material sphere. The unity is not one of physical geography, it belongs to the realm of ideas. It is a matter for men's minds and hearts. Our country has suffered when internal dissensions predominated and central unity declined. We used to complain that those who ruled us for centuries adopted the principle of divide and rule. At any rate it is true that our subjection was due to our divisions. We must therefore guard ourselves against separatist tendencies of language, religion and province. It is in the universities that we should develop a corporate feeling and a feeling of social purpose. Our universities must give inspiration to a generation which stands in sore need of it.

In the different branches of our planning effort we require trained men and it is for the universities to supply them. Naturally young people wish to get trained in scientific, technological and professional courses. Many of the changes that have transformed our daily lives, our hopes and ideals for the future are the results of the dominating role which science has come to play in our lives. No such radical changes have ever before occurred in so brief a period of our history. But an exclusive or one-sided emphasis on scientific studies results in grave disadvantages. Power and wealth begin to exercise a kind of intoxication on the minds of men. We wish to get on and succeed. Other ends are subordinated to this

one end of achieving greater wealth and higher social status. The desire to get on is a laudable ambition. Our future welfare and destiny will depend more on our spiritual strength than on our material wealth.

Scientific progress is precarious and conditional. If we are only learned without being truly cultured, we become a danger to society, *sa-akṣaro viparīṭative rākṣaso bhavati dhruvam*—he who is literate, when inverted becomes a demon. There is an observation of Aristotle which is akin to this saying :

Man when perfected is the best of animals, but, when separated from law and justice, he is the worst of all since armed injustice is the more dangerous, and he is equipped at birth with arms meant to be used by intelligence and virtue which he may use for the worst ends. Wherefore if he have not virtue, he is the most unholy and the most savage of animals.

In the international scene, the crisis which confronts us is the gravest in the whole of recorded history. We are armed with the weapons of modern science and the techniques of modern psychology, without ourselves being redeemed from greed, selfishness and love of power. We have increased our power over nature, but not over ourselves. Science and technology are not a cure for selfishness or a key to the mystery of the universe. Our progress can be secure only in an atmosphere of confidence, hope and security.

To make a new start we need a new approach. Respect for the basic values of spirit is the only antidote to the distempers of our society, social, economic

and political. We must recognize that there is something in man that hungers and thirsts after righteousness. If sheer confusion dominates the scene and we live in an age of anxiety and greed, it is because our training has been one-sided. It is wrong to assume that the only means required for the betterment of mankind are more and more of scientific discovery and technological improvement.

It is through the study of the great classics of the world that we grow in our spirit. The basis of democracy is the central principle of all religions, that there is an intimate connection between the mind of man and the moving spirit of the universe. This principle of democracy must become an effective faith. In our educational institutions, we can train our young men and women in the spirit of democracy. We must increase wealth, reduce inequalities and raise the standards of the common man. Let the bright image of a new India where we will be free socially and economically break through the fogs of fear and ignorance, self-interest and superstition.

The importance of education is not only in knowledge and skill, but it is to help us to live with others. Co-operative and mutually helpful living is what we should be trained for. Moral qualities are of greater value than intellectual accomplishments. We have in our country great natural resources, intelligent men and women and if in addition we learn to work together with pleasure, with pride, with a sense of duty in the sacred task of rebuilding our country, no one can prevent us from reaching our goal. The Buddha says: 'None else compels, ye suffer from yourselves. If our institutions give our young men

character and democratic discipline, the future of our country is safe. Dharma is what holds society together.

*dharma eva hato hanti, dharmo rakṣati rakṣitaḥ.*

## On Co-existence

**I**NDIA is not so much a geographical expression as an attitude of mind, an orientation, a particular outlook. Professor Childe of the University of London, writing about ancient India, makes a remark that in 3250 B.C., India confronted Egypt and Babylon with a distinctive civilization, a definite pattern of life which still endures. It is the basis, he said, of modern Indian civilization. Modern Greece is different from ancient Greece, modern Egypt is different from ancient Egypt, but modern India is not fundamentally, so far as the outlook is concerned, different from ancient India.

Among the relics of the Mohenjo-Dāro and Harappa excavations you find an image of a prototype of the god Śiva seated on a lotus throne with his eyes shut, in a posture of meditation, with the animal creation around him. There you have the fundamental outlook which has dominated the spiritual landscape of the country. From the beginning it was felt that he who, by the power of his meditation, establishes supremacy over his own appetites and emotions, is greater than one who is able to win the battles of the world; in other words, self-conquest is more important than conquest of countries. We believe that the greatest conquerors are those who

overcome their enemies without the use of force.

From that time down to our own we will find in India this image of one rapt in meditation. You find it in the Upaniṣhads, you find in the Buddha. The statues of the Buddha indicate to us how he was victorious over ill-will, bigotry, etc. Every generation and every part of the country produced people who incarnated this ideal.

Religion is not for us so much doctrinal conformity or ceremonial piety as the re-changing of our nature, the transforming of our personality—becoming something different from what we are. It is a participation in the ultimate mystery of the world.

When we identify religion with such an outlook, doctrinal rivalries and credal conflicts become irrelevant. From that day to this there have been different pathways recognized for the realization of the religious goal which is the fulfilment of our true nature. So the idea of a peaceful, active, mutually educative co-existence has been with us for ages. When it is said that India is a secular State, it does not mean that India worships material comforts and luxuries or does not recognize that there are higher laws of the universe than those which govern the physical world of space and time. It only means it does not stand for any particular religion but deals impartially with all religions, that it adopts the philosophy of active co-existence among the religions of the world. That is the meaning of a secular State.

So long as we regard doctrines as pathways to the realization of the Supreme and not final statements of the truth, there will be no conflicts, disputations, or controversies. Religious wars arise when we exalt

dogma and regard it as infallible. The Aryan and the Dravidian, the Hindu and the Buddhist, all the races which poured into the country have been, relatively speaking, welded into a corporate unity.

There are other views, also, which have come down to us. If we turn to the West, we find the distinction between the Greek and the Barbarian with which European history started. Actually, however, Greece acquired a great deal from the 'Barbarian, countries of Egypt, Babylon and Iran. If we go a step forward, we will find that Justinian closed down the schools of Athens, thinking Greece and Galilee could not co-exist, but we know that Greece has entered into the history of Christianity. Augustine is full of Plato and Plotinus; Aquinas is full of Aristotle. Again, we have the philosophy of either this or that when we come to the Crusades; either the Cross or the Crescent. We have discovered that the Cross and the Crescent could live together, educating each other. The modern European Renaissance is the product of the enlightenment brought to Europe by the Arab translators of the great Greek works, and those Muslim theologians, Averrhoes and Avicenna, have contributed a great deal to the development of Christian thought. We had centuries of conflict between the Catholics and the Protestants. Again, it was thought either this or that. We find now that the Catholics and the Protestants can live together, can be of assistance to each other and can educate each other. We have the conflicts between the blocs today. We are now thinking of having a policy of active co-existence. Whereas the tradition of either this or that has led to conflicts in the world,

the tradition of this and that is likely to bring about a healing of the nations of the world. The tradition of 'either-or' is derived from the acceptance of doctrinal exclusiveness, a kind of finality that we have attained the truth and we have got it and it is necessary for us to dispel the darkness among those who have not found the truth.

The philosophy of this and that indicates that God has not left Himself without a witness among any people, whoever they may be. They will all stand as witness to the working of God's love. There are no people who have been orphaned or left forlorn in the world. The Qurān says: 'Unto every people did we send a messenger, to teach them to worship God.' So, if we adopt the policy of the universality of the Supreme, from it follows the philosophy of active co-existence.

Today, we have come to realize the unwisdom of the policy of this or that. There was a time when military methods were able to result in success for our views. Those days are over. An aerial bombardment today makes no distinction between the combatant and the civilian. A thermo-nuclear bombardment will not make any distinction of nations. We have, therefore, come to a state when it will be possible for us, by merely pressing a button, to destroy a whole continent. By trying to win leadership in the development of these diabolical weapons we are not likely to help our own views. We have come to realize that we have to live together or die together and if we are to live together, we must have tolerance, of other people's views; religious tolerance, ideological tolerance, and these are the things which have

become inevitable in the interests of self-preservation. Forgiveness is love at its highest power.

If we, therefore, wish to adopt a philosophy of active co-existence, our fundamental attitude that we are the possessors of light and others are grovelling in darkness will have to be abandoned. India has suffered on account of that policy of co-existence. But that does not matter. We are bound to suffer if we stick to the truth, but that does not matter.

The great symbol of Christianity is the Cross where Jesus suffered material defeat for the sake of spiritual victory. If we feel that we are on the right lines, it is essential for us to adopt the attitude that we do not undertake things in the hope of succeeding but we undertake things because they are right.

I have no doubt that the philosophy which now dominates this country is the philosophy which does not believe in either extermination or segregation, or assimilation, but it does believe in achieving racial harmony, and if racial harmony is to be achieved, our whole outlook on life must be different. We must respect every individual. He may not be as great as we are; he may not have the intellectual achievement or the educational gifts or the vast experience which some of us may claim to possess, but that does not mean that the unsuspected possibilities and potentialities of people have all been explored. There is so much unknown to us that may yet come out.

I do hope India will adopt a philosophy which says: 'God is assisting everyone to grow to his fullest stature, and it is our duty to provide the atmosphere and circumstances which will help each individual to grow to his utmost.' The world as a whole

**demands the philosophy of co-existence, not merely passive, neutral co-existence, but active, mutual, educative co-existence.**

**Military solutions to political problems are good for nothing. Ultimately they will leave bitterness behind. Political solutions will have to be devised for political problems, and I do hope that those who are in authority in this country will work towards racial harmony in this great land.**

## On Reading

**W**E DO NOT realize adequately to what extent our minds are moulded by the books we read especially in youth. We have several means by which we acquire knowledge today—the radio, the cinema, the newspaper and now we also have television, but reading of books is the most ancient and the most effective of them all. Reading a book is different from mechanized instruction. *Svādhyāya* or *adhyayana* has been enjoined on us. We are never alone when we have books for our companions.

A great writer has said that religion is what a man does with his solitariness. It is not merely religion but art and literature, scientific discovery and technological invention that are the outcome of what a man does with his solitariness. In the modern world we tend to be gregarious beings. When we have a little leisure we run to parties, clubs or other social activities. We are afraid to be alone with ourselves, afraid to stand and stare, much less to sit and think. We are happy with others, not with ourselves. Pascal tells us that all the evils of the world arise from the fact that men are unable to sit still in a room. Reading a book gives us the habit of solitary reflection and true enjoyment.

There is a general complaint that there is a lower-

ing of standards on all fronts. The leaders who fail in their sense of duty mislead their followers.

*pradhānāḥ dharmam utkrāmya adharmaṇa prajāṁ pravartayanti*: The root of the malady is in the human individual. It underlies our political, economic and social practices. We must change the nature of the individual. Literature has this supreme function of raising the quality of human beings. The word *sāhitya* is derived from *sahita* and is that which makes for togetherness, unity, coherence.

When we read great classics, our minds become dyed to their thoughts. Great books foster the psychological health of the reader. They induce in us largeness of mind and normative vision. They give us moral contentment. Indulgence is treason to civilized values.

*saṁsāra-viṣa-vṛkṣasya dve phale amṛtopamaḥ  
kāvyāmṛta-rasāsvādaḥ sallāphḥ sajjanaissaha.*

Some books entertain, others instruct, still others elevate our nature. The last are the books which we should read and digest. The goal of human life, we have held, is spiritual fulfilment. Joy or *ānanda* is a sign of triumph. The books that give us joy are different from those which give us pleasure or satisfaction. Joy is the sign of ripeness. When we derive joy from the reading of a book we identify ourselves with what we read even as we become one with the music we hear. Joy is more lasting than pleasure and endures even through pain. The works which induce joy are impersonal and lead to an extinction of the ego. They are expressions not

of raw emotion or technical excellence but of emotion fused with thought and recollected in tranquillity. No one who is not a seer can produce great literature: *nānṛṣiḥ kurute kāvyam*. The supreme creations of our people's imagination are among the masterpieces of world literature. They are the best interpreters of our past and in reading them we are in communion with great minds of thousands of years ago. We must read them if we are to become conscious of our tradition.

We do not maintain a tradition by simply repeating the words and acts of our fathers. By doing so we deprive them of their significance. No tradition can be kept alive without the critical and creative change and renewal which understanding can give. The individual's contribution in turn depends on the pressure on him of the new problems of the age.

The three chief features of our age are the scientific and the technological revolution, the liberation of dependent countries in Asia and Africa and the growing unity of the world. We should read books which give us a scientific temper and outlook. We have to read the histories of Asian and African countries, know their hopes and aspirations. We have also to take into account the fact of the growing unity of the world. The intellectual wealth of all mankind is at the service of each one of us, if we overcome the barriers of language. The whole past and the whole world must be alive in one's heart. Books are the means by which we build bridges between cultures. The opposition of cultures requires to be broken down. Sensitive men thrown in among a people with little capacity for love, who fear one another and

hate one another should help to remove suspicion and fear which come to us more easily than understanding and love. Individual nations should be trained to think in terms of the welfare of humanity as a whole : *viśvaśśriyaḥ kāvyaṁ*. Great books are of use to us at a time when our critical values are thrown into confusion. Many of us are not men but shadows of men. We suffer from contradictory impulses. We have fear, suspicion, greed, jealousy as well as kindness, goodwill, the desire to serve and help one another. If we wish to create a normal, harmonious human society, the former should be held in check and the latter encouraged. A general spiritual awakening is indispensable. We must not debauch the minds of our people with trivialities. There is a good deal to be said for our ancient practice of starting the day's work with a few minutes of silent meditation and the reading of sacred classics. Everything will pass away, wealth, possessions, even kingdoms. Even great nations are not immortal. But truth, beauty and loving kindness will live for ever. *māno hi mahatām dhanam*.

## On History

**H**ISTORY is not a mere series of intrigues and aggressions, furies and devastations, pillages and conquests organized by kings and rulers, despots and dictators. This is not the whole story. We should not be satisfied with the deeds and misdeeds of our emperors, and statesmen, the dates of their births and deaths, their triumphs and defeats. There is the cultural history, the social history, and the history of the sciences. In a true sense history is a struggle of man to reach beyond himself, to approximate to the ideal of freedom and of human concord. Rightly studied it should not breed hatred among nations. It must look upon nations, great and small, as participants in a common enterprise, some fortunate in their undertakings, others restricted in their efforts, unequal in their contributions but equal in their desire and will for peace and progress. History should teach us how nations gave to each other and took from each other. In that way it must prepare us for the future order.

Man, as he is, is not to be regarded as the crowning glory of evolution. The story of life on earth goes back to a thousand million years. In each geological period there have appeared creatures which might have been represented as the highest types of

creation. Yet those forms of life have been superseded by others. When we look at the steady climb of life on the path of evolution, it is presumptuous to assume that man, the latest product, is the last word or the final crowning glory, and with his arrival the steps of evolution have come to a sudden end. - If the past is any clue to the future, we cannot regard mankind as anything more than a stage in life's progress, and a mile-stone on the path of evolution towards a greater future. The next stage is not in his physique but in his psyche, in his mind and spirit, in the emergence of a larger understanding and awareness, in the development of a new integration of character adequate to the new age. When he gains a philosophic consciousness and an intensity of understanding, a profound apprehension of the meaning of the whole, there will result a more adequate social order which will influence not only individuals but peoples and nations. We have to fight for this order first in our own souls, then in the world outside. This means that man must purge himself of his intolerance, his love of power.

Progress is not a law of nature. To say that history is the product of the automatic operation of impersonal forces, mechanical nature, or economic production is wrong. Human effort is the method by which our needs are realized. Hegel, Marx, Spengler suggest a kind of inevitability of history. Spengler, for example, traces an analogy between the life-cycle of a living organism and that of a culture. They are born, have a youth, mature, grow old and die. History is a creative process, a meaningful pattern. It is brought about by the spirit in man.

While external conditions determine our progress to a large extent, they are not completely coercive. Machinistic fatalism is drawing mankind near to the abyss of self-destruction. We must realize that the human individual is capable of transcending conditions and controlling them. Human beings are not mechanical entities. If they were so, their future would be completely predictable. But they are creative human spirits.

History advances by jumps, not always by gradual changes. It was a characteristic error of the past to count on gradual evolution, to presume that in the advances of history, as in the biological world, spontaneous realities emerge suddenly and in a sense without preparation. History proceeds very often by jumps which we call revolutions.

There is a well-known saying that the only thing we learn from history is that we learn nothing from it. This is a comment not on history but on human stupidity. If we are careful we can learn a great deal from history. Our past history demonstrates that we failed whenever our centre weakened, when internal dissensions became prominent, when famine and disease were allowed to spread, when administration became unclean and corrupt. These indicate the great need for warding off the forces that are subversive of stable order. Contemporary history also reinforces this truth. Russia before the October Revolution, Germany in the period of economic depression which brought Hitler to power after the practical wiping out of the middle classes, China in the forties and more recently Egypt—they demonstrate that when selfish leaders develop vested interests

**in the administration, national discords arise, economic development is checked and revolutions occur.**

**We find today in our country in spite of the attainment of independence and the many impressive achievements, a wide-spread sense of dissatisfaction and frustration. If these things are to be removed and if the young men and women are to be persuaded to enlist themselves in the work of internal consolidation and development, it is essential to emphasize national unity, rapid economic development and a pure, clean and honest administration. We must put down the forces that impair our national unity, retard our economic progress, whether these forces come from the rich or the poor, the capitalist or the labourer, and endeavour to raise standards of efficiency and honesty in our administration. National unity, economic reconstruction and good government are the needs of the hour.**

**We are living in days of destiny. What happens in our country in the next few years will determine not only the future of our land but of a large part of the world. This is not a time for faint-heartedness. We must avoid the deadly sin of cynicism, of despair. However rugged the obstacles that confront us may seem, we must face them with honesty and seriousness and push on. That is the warning of history.**

## On Drama

**D**RAMA has been with us for a long time past. Indian tradition preserved in the *Nāṭya-śāstra* claims for the drama a divine origin. It is said to be the fifth Veda intended to give pleasure to both eyes and ears and transmit the ultimate truths.<sup>1</sup> Brahmā took the element of recitation from the Ṛg Veda, song from the Sāma Veda, the mimetic art from the Yajur Veda and sentiment from the Atharva Veda. At Brahmā's bidding the Divine architect, Viśvakarma built a playhouse. In Indian drama, however, the stage properties were few and simple. We did not have much elaborate scenery but the effects were produced by gestures. Watering a plant was done by a gesture imitation of the process, which satisfied the audience. Plants were not brought on the stage and watered. Normally we have actors (*naṭa*) and actresses (*naṭī*). Sometimes a hero's part is performed by a girl.

A dramatic performance became an art when recitation, gestures, movements, dance were used to rouse sentiments in the minds of the audience. *Nāṭyadarpaṇa* says: *nāṭākām iti nātyati vicitttam rañjanāt praveśena sabhyānāṁh ṛdayām nartayati iti*

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *sarva-śāstrārtha sarīpannam sarva-śilpa pradarsanam nāṭyākhyam pañcamam vedom setihāsam karomy aham.*

*nāṭakam.*

Through poetry and drama, man reveals himself to himself. He mirrors his soul; he expresses the desires, the urges, the hopes, the drama, the successes and failures in his struggle to make himself at home in the world. All literature is the expression of intensity of feeling. *vākyam rasātmakam kāvyam*. Jagannātha Paṇḍit says: *ramanīyārtha-pratipādakam vākyam kāvyam*. Again, *kavikṛtam kāvyam*. *Kāvya* is of two kinds, *śrāvya* and *dṛśya*. The latter is *nāṭaka* or drama. The dramatist or the playwright delights us by the perfection of his art, its variety, its music and its mood. He can do so if he is a man of *svādhyāya* and *tapas*, of learning and intensity of spirit.

If drama is to be one of the most powerful manifestations of the human mind, there must be maturity of mind and greatness of soul. Without these we cannot win and hold the affection of people across distances of time and space. If any literary work is to have enduring quality, abiding power, the author should have magnificence of mind and intensity of vision. If we work too much on the surface, the deeper and more obscure feelings of life find no adequate expression. Rootlessness in our lives reflects itself in the lack of richness in our lives and the superficial character in our writings. Our plays may be striking and admirable in many ways but they will not touch the depths in us. They may excite a tumult in our minds but not touch the deeps. A great drama overwhelms, devastates, annihilates us and yet exalts us and makes us new.

The whole plenitude of the dramatist's inner

vision is applied to the full extent of the world to all its depths and heights. Any subject, any topic may be chosen for dramatic representation—virtue and vice, joy and sorrow, pride and prejudice. The world is complex and complicated.

*kvacid vīṇā-vādyam kvacid api ca hāheti ruditam  
kvacin nārī ramyā kvacid api jarā-jarjara-vapuh  
kvacid vidvad-gosthī kvacid api surāmattakalah  
na jāne saṁsāraḥ kim amṛtamayaḥ kim viṣamayaḥ*

‘Here the sound of *vīṇa*, there the voice of wailing; here pretty women, there tottering withered dames; here the meeting of learned men; there is brawls of the drunken. I do not know whether this world is heaven or hell.’ The poet holds the mirror up to nature in all its variety.

Though we have the conflict between good and evil, the Indian view does not adopt a Manichean dualism, which believes in the ultimacy of the opposites of good and evil. Good is bound to triumph, for there is a moral government of the universe. Truth will triumph, so beauty and goodness.

Suffering is not the final end of life. That is perhaps why we do not have tragedies. There are tragic situations where man is at grips with fate, where there is an inter-play of character and circumstance, but there are no tragic endings. For the writer has faith in the ultimate decency of things.

While the dramatist shows us the heights and depths to which man can rise or fall, he induces in us sympathy for the good and hatred of the evil. He

affects our feelings directly and conveys ideas indirectly. The writer does not air views but imperceptibly changes the life. As Mammata says in his *Kāvya-prakāśa*: *kāntā sammitatayopadeśyuje*. He comments: *kānteva sarāsatāpāda-nenābhimukhī-kṛtya rāmādivad vartitavyam na rāvaṇādivad ity upadeśam ca yathāyogaṁ koveḥ sahrdayasya ca karotīti sarvathā tatra yataniyam*.

An actor must be able to inspire in his audience the feelings of the characters he represents. There are some who hold that the actor should lose himself in his part; others think that he must be detached from it. By over-acting we sometimes tear passions to tatters. The actor must not be overwhelmed by emotions but interpret them and present them in intellectual terms.<sup>1</sup> It is said that King Kulaśekhara of Tamilnad (twelfth century) when he heard the verse that Rāma was alone to meet the fourteen thousand demons, he became so excited that he immediately armed himself from head to foot and was about to march with all his army to meet Rāvana as an ally of Rāma.

*śuśrāva tam imam ślokaṁ bhaktimān kulaśekharaḥ  
caturdaśa-sahasrāṇi rakṣasām bhīma-karmaṇām  
ekas ca rāmo dharmātmā katham yuddham bhaviṣyati  
asaḥṣṇus tato' dharma-yuddham śīghram skhaladgatiḥ  
dhanurvāṇam samādāva khaḍgam carma ca vīryavān  
catur-anga-balobeto jana-sthānam kṛtyatvaraḥ  
tat kṣaṇe tasya prataste saḥyārtham hari-priyaḥ.*<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Cf. *Mandāra-maranda*:

*utpādayan sahrdaye rasajñānam niranantaram  
anutaritḥ sthīro yo'rtho'bhinayaḥ so'bhidhiyate.*

<sup>2</sup>Anantācārya; *Prapaṇāmṛta*; Chapter 86.

Indian drama has a great future. After independence there is a great quickening of the human mind, a renaissance of artistic activity. We hope that lasting works may be produced in this age. Both writers and actors are found in plenty. Indians have a natural gift for acting. I see in out-of-the-way small schools and colleges young boys and girls acting with such superb skill and grace that it fills me with hope for the future of drama in our country. In all our big centres new theatres are springing up. In a theatre club, actors and writers and all those interested in drama may bring about greater understanding among theatre lovers. We may watch the theatre movements in other countries and profit from them. We must encourage artists to try new experiments and not always follow the beaten track.

Though artists are born, not made, training will help actors of both kinds. Every school and college should have a dramatic society. We must develop our drama in consistency with our temperaments and traditions. Drama is education, entertainment and recreation.

It is said that drama creates the conscience of the age. We cannot make people good by acts of parliament. Nor is it possible by constitutional provisions to remove deep-seated social prejudices. We influence social behaviour by creating public opinion.

## On Education

**T**HE prevalent system of education suffers from two serious defects, that it was mainly literary in character and that it ignored the national tradition. It is relatively inexpensive to train students in arts, law and commerce, but it costs a great deal to train them in sciences, engineering and technology which are essential for the development of our resources and for raising our standards of living.

No one can be said to be truly educated if his knowledge is limited to one special branch. The evils of specialization can be combatted only by a course in what is now called general education.

There have been in the past glamorous and powerful States; when they were separated from their roots, they became petrified. They swirled through the spaces of history like brilliant phenomena and burnt themselves out like meteors since they were torn away from the fire that generated and fed them. The National Council of Education was, therefore, anxious that its students should be given a national outlook, educated in the national spirit. When we speak of national education, it does not mean that subjects like physics and chemistry, engineering and technology, change with the boundaries of nations. It means that there is a national heritage, a tradition of values

into which the students should be initiated. India is not a geographical abstraction but a living spirit. The outlook associated with this country has been a spiritual one, that there are higher laws of the universe than those studied by sciences and technology, that the world is more than what we see, feel, touch and measure.

The results of science have been so impressive in their practical applications that we are tempted to believe that the material world ruled by its laws is the only world that exists. The changes that have been effected by science in the last fifty years have been greater than those which took place in the last three or four thousand years. Radio, telephone, aeroplane, penicillin, plastics, high explosive shell and the atom bomb, whether they work for our good or evil, all stem from science. But all this does not suggest the omnipotence of matter. It discloses the omnipotence of the human spirit. It is the spirit in man that has penetrated the secrets of nature. Again, the scientist, if he is to be successful, should develop the qualities of disciplined devotion and disinterestedness. He must possess tolerance, openmindedness, freedom from prejudice and hospitality to new ideas.

Science reveals to us the inexhaustible richness of the world, its unexpectedness and wonder. Science does not profess to solve all problems. There are regions where its writ does not run. When all is said and done, the world remains a mystery. The *Bhagavad-gītā* says:

*avyaktādīni bhūtāni vyakta-madhyāni bhārata  
avyakta nidhanāny eva tatra kā paridevanā.*

The ultimate questions are too deep and mysterious for science. We should recognize that we understand and control only a tiny fraction of the universe.

A scientific study of the world does not give us a complete knowledge of the world. There are limits to the knowledge given by science. From physics to chemistry, from chemistry to biology, from biology to psychology, from psychology to logic, ethics and aesthetics, we seem to have an unbroken, continuous, logical chain, a series of causes and effects ending up with parliamentary governments and large universities. But the mystery of the emergence of life from a non-living environment, of consciousness from an unconscious environment, the emergence of the ideas of truth, goodness and beauty from an environment which does not have them are blank spaces in our knowledge which cannot be filled. There are problems like the relation of body and mind, the nature of self-consciousness which are puzzles for science. Belief in a realm of spirit is not based on the gaps in knowledge but on the sense of mystery in the very heart of creation, inherent in the way in which the world works, obeying a certain order and yet emerging into novelties. God does not reveal Himself in nature and history by fits, only in crises and catastrophes. Where scientific knowledge ends and the realm of mystery begins may shift, but there are two spheres, one capable of scientific explanation and the other not, which will always remain. There is a mystery in the heart of the world. To deny it is not to destroy it. We cannot weigh and measure the beauty of *Meghadūta* or the value of saintliness. The world of truth and falsehood, right and wrong, beauty and ugliness, is

different from the world of science. The world of scientific facts and the world of values are two different worlds. They belong to one whole controlled by a presence greater than we are and is called Absolute Reality. Towards it we have a feeling of awe and humility and we should try to act in this world in conformity with the spiritual direction of the universe. Religion is right belief, right feeling and right action. It is all the three. It is not intellectual conviction, emotional ecstasy, or social service. It is all the three. The passage from the intellectual to the spiritual is not a quantitative accumulation but a qualitative leap. The transition from *vijnāna* to *ānanda* is a leap from one orbit to another.

A scientific attitude requires us to be open-minded in regard to different facts and values. Man's awareness of himself, as living in a world which is at once terrifying and fascinating, his feeling of awe and reverence, humility and joy, are basic experiences which religion studies. They are derived from a sense of the holy. We cannot take a part of our experience and make it the whole. Nor can we mix up scientific descriptions of facts with speculative hypotheses. Marxist sociology or Freudian psychology mixes up facts with interpretations.

If, in spite of the great knowledge we have accumulated, we are still in a perilous state, in an unhappy predicament, it is because we are indifferent to the higher laws of the universe. What is it that prevents the use of the great inventions for making the world into a happier and better place than it is? The passions of the human heart, stupidity, cussedness, vileness and wildness. We must tame the savageness

of man. Even if a nuclear war is prevented, without sufficient progress in human nature, we will stagger to a stand-still, a stalemate. It is here that the tradition of our country is of value. We must restore the truths of spirit to the central place in the minds of men. They must transform us, give us liberality, understanding, freedom. The minds and hearts of people require to be altered. We must be able to make the right choice. This depends on the perceptions and ideas of men and women, on the moral judgments of the community; on the inner compulsions which control us. We must train not only the intellect but bring grace into the heart of man, *tejasvināvadhītam astu*. If we are truly spiritual, we will cut off with a drastic hand so much that has come down to us in the name of religion which is repugnant to our minds and hearts. I sometimes feel that no people preached truth more vigorously and practised it less effectively.

In another sense national education should equip us to act as citizens of this great country which stretches from the Himalayas to Kanyā Kumārī, from Kutch to Assam. Our great leaders have impressed on us the concept of the unity of the nation. Our epics, our literary classics, our religious pilgrimages proclaim the unity of the country. Aśoka's edicts, for example, are found in all parts of the country, from Mysore and Andhra in the South to Delhi and Takṣaśilā in the North. From the beginning of our history we have been a people pledged to peace and goodwill to all. The Aśokan lions are the watchers of the four quarters and his *dharmacakra* symbolizes the triumph of virtue over vice. In a reborn India we have revived these ancient symbols. Our labo-

ratories established in different parts of the country, our cultural festivals point to the ideal of oneness of our country. They warn us against the danger of breaking up the nation into fragments. Across the centuries of our history are written the evils of internal clashes, racial and religious, linguistic and regional. They brought us shame and subjection. Even the partition of our country was the result of our defective sense of nationhood. The strength of our country is in proportion to its unity. Our lives should be clean, noble and dedicated to selfless work.

## On Literature

**T**HE aim of literature is the good of the world—*viśvaśreyaḥ kāvyem*. Its purpose is not to reflect the world but to redeem the world. It is not to mirror the glinting surfaces of the given but to recreate the experience. The literary artiste must enter into solitude, glimpse the vision, bring it down to earth, shape it with emotion, and carve it into words. Literature is the channel between spiritual vision and human beings. The poet is a priest of the invisible world, a divine creator, a kavi. He is not a mere entertainer but is a prophet who inspires and expresses in varied ways the entire aspirations of the society to which he belongs. All this means concentration and integrity which become difficult, if not impossible, if our minds are filled with sickness and violence or if we become puppets with stereo-typed opinions.

When we aim at a Welfare State and expect the State to provide all things, we must see to it, in the interests of our social health and vitality, that the individual does not lose the freedom to live his own standards, according to the dictates of his own conscience, that he has the liberty to conform or not conform, to do, undo, or misdo so long as he does not interfere with the equal freedom of others, and does not cross the limits of decency. Society is

becoming more and more regimented. The scope for free activity is becoming increasingly restricted. We are all numbered and docketed. We are becoming anonymous units in a crowd, not free subjects in a society. The individual seeks the shelter of the crowd for safety, for comfort, for relief from loneliness, from responsibility. We have a fear of freedom. When our activities are regulated, imagination which rests in solitude cannot thrive. Unless the individual has the courage to be lonely in his mind, free in his thought, he is not capable of great writing. Great literature, like true religion, is what a man does with his solitariness, to use Whitehead's phrase. W. B. Yeats says:

*We make out of the quarrel with others, rhetoric but  
out of the quarrel with ourselves, poetry.*

Whatever gives the shock of intellectual and imaginative pleasure and says something fresh and stimulating is literature or sāhitya. The Ṛg Veda, the first literary document in the world, is not merely religion and symbolism but poetry and literature. The Bible, the Avesta, and the Qurān are not merely classics of religion but are works of literature. The seer of the Ṛg Veda clothe exalted thought in words of force and feeling. The first verse reads:

*agnim īle purohitam yajñasya devam  
ṛtvijam hotāram ratna dhātamam.*

The seer piles up five adjectives to suggest Agni's competence to confer material and spiritual blessings.

In the Upaniṣads, we find noble ideals and artistic expression. Many literary devices are employed to increase the effect and impress the reader, e.g. in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, the writer points out, in a series of passages, how will objects of the world, earthly possessions, romantic delights provide opportunities for the realization of the self:

*na vā are patyuh kāmāya patiḥ priyo bhavati, ātmanas tu kāmāya patiḥ priyo bhavati; na vā are jāyāyai kāmāya jāyā priyā bhavati, ātmanas tu kāmāya jāyā priyā bhavati: na vā are putrāṇām kāmāya putrāḥ priyā bhavanti, ātmanas tu kāmāya putrāḥ priyā bhavanti; na vā are vittasya kāmāya vittam priyam bhavati, ātmanas tu kāmāya vittam priyam bhavati. . .*

and so on.

In the *Chāṇḍāgya Upaniṣad*, it is said:

*yathā, saumya, ekena mṛtṛṇḍena sarvam mṛṇmayam vijñātam syāt, vācārambhaṇam vikāro nāmadheyam mṛṭtikety eva satyam.*

To illustrate the same point, other images of a nugget of gold, a pair of scissors, are used.

Another Upaniṣad, after pointing out that we live in a three-storeyed house of waking, dream and sleep, refers to the state of freedom or illumination in words of intellectual rigour and aesthetic sensibility:

*nāntaḥ prajñam, na bahiḥ prajñam, nobhayataḥ prajñam, na prajñāna ghanam, na prajñam, na prajñam, adṛṣtam, avyavahāryam, agrāhyam, alakṣaṇam,*

*acintyam, avyapadeśyam, ekātma-pratyayasāram,  
prapañcopaśamam, śāntam, śivam, advaitam, cutur-  
tham manyante, a ātma, sa vijñeyaḥ.*

It is not necessary to refer to the beauty and grace of the *Bhagavadgītā*.

It is a delight to read the stately and sonorous prose of Śaṅkara. Look at this:

*sa ca bhagavān jñānaiśvarya-śakti-bala-vīrya-tejobhiḥ  
sadā sampannah, triguṇātmikān vaiṣṇavīm svām  
māyām mūlaprakṛtiṁ vaśikṛtya, ajo, avyaya, bhūtā-  
nām īśvaro, nityaśuddha-buddha-mukta-svabhāvopi  
san, svamāyayā dehavān iva jāta iva lokānugraham  
kurvan iva lakṣyate.<sup>1</sup>*

Gandhi includes in his prayers the famous verse from Guru Govind Singh's writings:

*īśvara alla tera nāma  
mandir masjidā tere dhāma  
sabako sanmati de bhagvān.*

Indian writers, whatever subjects they handle, aim at literary grace and distinction. Sāhitya includes the classics of religion and philosophy even as Greek literature includes Plato's *Dialogues* and Thucydides' *History*.

Literature has been one of our major contributions to the world. Our epics and plays, our tales and folk-lore transmit to us the great ideals of harmony with nature and integrity of mind. They have

<sup>1</sup>*Commentary on the Bhagavadgītā.*

influenced the literature of the different languages of the country. In the millenium between the Greek drama and the Elizabethan the only drama of quality in the world is, according to Berriedale Keith, the Indian drama. An Indian drama is not merely a play. It is poetry, music, symbolism and religion. Images change one another beyond the speed of thought in the writings of Kālidāsa who is known outside our frontiers. He represents the spirit of India, even as Shakespeare England, Goethe Germany and Pushkin Russia.

It is by its art and literature that a society is judged at the bar of history. They are the reflection of the vitality of a race. They decline when people suffer from spiritual exhaustion.

We live today in an age of change, adventure, opportunity and expanding horizons. New influences are penetrating our thought. Our minds are in confusion. If some of us suffer from boredom and triviality, it is because we are neglecting the spirit in man and making him a subject of economic greeds or a bundle of conditioned reflexes. It is for the men of letters, the artists and the thinkers to recapture the dignity, the mission and the destiny of this ancient race and produce a new climate of ideas which will prepare for the universal republic of letters and a world society.

## On Art

INDIA has had a long tradition in fine arts and even in painting the tradition goes back to the pre-Christian era. From the drawings in red pigment of animals and hunting scenes in the pre-historic caves of Singhanpur and Mirzapur, it is evident that painting has had a long history in this country.<sup>1</sup> The *Rāmāyaṇa*, the *Vinayā Piṭaka* refer to *citraśālās* which answer to our picture galleries. The Buddhist frescoes found on the walls of a cave in Sirguya in Madhya Pradesh belong to the first century before Christ. Fa Hien and Yuan Chuang described many buildings as famous for the excellence of their murals.

The art of fresco painting in the Ajanta caves reached a perfection never surpassed anywhere else. The nobility of the theme, the majestic scope of the design, the unity of the composition, the clearness, the simplicity and the firmness of the line give us an impression of the astonishing perfection of the whole. Religious piety fused architecture, sculpture and painting into a happy harmony. These artists with their deeply religious spirit worked in anonymity.

<sup>1</sup> 'There are primitive records of hunting scenes crudely drawn on the walls of a group of caves in the Kaimur range of Central India, while examples of painting of the later Stone Age have been found in excavations in the Vindhya hills.'—Percy Brow *Indian Painting*, p. 15.

They brought their faith, their sincerity as well as their skill to serve their religion.

After this period we have the Moghul and the Rajput Schools as well as independent developments in the South, in the Courts of Tanjore, Pudukkota and Mysore.<sup>1</sup> In the British period, occidental influences became prominent. As a part of the general cultural re-awakening we became conscious of our own artistic heritage. E. B. Havell, Ānānda Coomāraswāmy, and Abanindranath Tagore called upon Indian artists not to be mere slavish copyists of crude Western models but to realize the spirit of India's great artistic past and develop free creative expression.

The new School of Painting inspired by the master artists of Ajanta, produced a series of spontaneous masterpieces which revealed the soul of India to the world. They became famous for their spiritual quality, aesthetic appeal and inward truthfulness or integrity. The history of Indian painting presents the cultural and spiritual history of the Indian people.

Not only was the art practised from ancient times without any gap—though our knowledge of the history of the art may have many gaps—the theory of it has also been formulated. In a pre-Buddhist work called *Śaḍ-aṅga* or the six limbs of painting, six principles were set forth. (i) *Rūpa-bheda* or knowledge of appearances. We must study the forms, the objects animate and inanimate, human figures, nature and landscape. (ii) *Pramāṇaṇa* or correct perception,

<sup>1</sup>Abul Fazl, writing of contemporary Hindu painting, says: "Their pictures surpass our conception of things. Few indeed in the whole world are found equal to them."—*Aini Akbari*. Blockmann's E. T. Vol. I, p. 107.

measure, structure, proportion, perspective. (iii) *Bhāva*, or the action of feelings on forms. (iv) *Lāvanya-yojanam* or the infusion of grace or beauty in the artistic representation. (v) *Sādrśyam* or similitude, truth. (vi) *Varnika-bhaṅga* or the skilful use of brush and colours, control over technique.

The purpose of all art is sacramental. In ancient times, art was used not as a means for public enjoyment, but as an accessory of worship. The great displays of sculpture and painting took place in India as in ancient Greece in temples and were made in honour of the gods. In temples and cathedrals men became conscious of the power of art, to quicken their spirits and give dignity and order to their lives.

*ātmasaṁskṛtiḥ vāva śīlpāni*: The arts, mechanical or fine, art for the refinement of the soul, *ātmasaṁskṛti*. They help fuller understanding of the human spirit and greatly enlarge our capacity for life. He who attains to the vision of beauty is from himself set free. In the disinterestedness of aesthetic contemplation, the human spirit is momentarily freed from the inconsistencies and confusions of temporal life.

*mokṣayate hi saṁsāraḥ* : Music and literature, dance and drama, sculpture and painting are intended to purge the soul of its defects and lead it to a vision of the Eternal. These arts cannot refine the soul unless they spring from the soul, unless the spirit of man raises itself above its usual routine level. The artist is a priest. The aim of art is to capture the inner and informing spirit and not merely the outward semblance. It is by integral insight or spiritual intuition rather than by observation and analysis of given objects that the sculptor or the painter attains

to the highest power of artistic expression.

Our arts are not concerned with the appearances of the actual. They are directed towards the realization of ideas, of the truth in the objects. Arts do not so much represent as suggest. They do not so much reproduce reality as create aesthetic emotion. They are interested in the spirit of men and things rather than in their material forms. In all arts we have imaginative creation. It is related of a famous modern painter that when he had painted a sunset, someone said to him: 'I never saw a sunset like that', and the painter replied: 'Don't you wish you could?' The artist's primary aspiration is for a redeemed world. His mind is not a mirror which reflects the glinting surfaces of the given. It is on fire, close to contemplation. Croce is correct when he speaks of 'the artist, who never makes a stroke with his brush without having previously seen it with his imagination'.<sup>1</sup> When the king Agnimitra found the portrait of Mālavikā lacking in fidelity to the original, he traced it to *śithilasamādhi*, impaired concentration.<sup>2</sup>

An agnostic and culturally uprooted age cannot hope to regain that faith and singleness of soul which gave to medieval Christian art its peculiar self-confidence and innocent intensity or to acquire that meditative calm which imparted such immanent sublimity to the Ajanta frescoes. But only work flushed by the past and pointing to the future has lasting significance. The appeal of great art is not to an esoteric clique. The poorest and the most illiterate respond to it. It has been in our country the great exponent of our national faith and tradition.

<sup>1</sup> *Aesthetic*, p. 162.

<sup>2</sup> II, 2.

## On Health and Efficiency

**T**HE very name Āyurveda points out the sanctity in which the science was held by us. We do not call it the science of disease; we call it the science of health, *ārogyaśāstra*, which we never disregard. It is generally contended that Indians were more interested in metaphysics and religion than in politics and human welfare. This is not quite correct. *dharmārtha kāmamokṣāṇām ārogyam mūlam uttamam*. For the practice of *dharma*, *artha*, *kāma* and *moksa*, the chief basis is *arogya*. In other words physical well-being, positive health is an essential prerequisite of any other kind of development, either of spiritual qualities or intellectual powers. The *Yoga Sutra* is said to be a science of the development of spiritual powers. But it insists that physical prowess is essential. *rūpālāvaṇya-bala-vajrasamhānanatvāni kāya-sampat*. *kāya-sampat* or physical prowess consists in the development of *rūpa* or beauty of form, *lāvaṇya* or radiance, *bala* or strength, *vajrasamhānanatva*, invulnerability like a diamond. In other words our thinkers make out that unless the human being has sound physical basis, it will not be possible for him to develop Yoga of either the mind or the spirit. So it cannot be argued that in our eagerness for metaphysical perfection of religious realization, we neglected the basis of all

those pursuits, health and well-being.

Health is not merely physical fitness; it is the wealth of energy, a kind of vital dynamism. *śarīra* or body is said to be *dharmasadhana*, an instrument for the practice of dharma. This is not possible if we merely avoid ailments. There must be positive over-flow, so to say, of physical energy. We must not merely keep well but use our health as a means for the development of higher pursuits.

In the ancient world, in every civilization, there was science of medicine. It is not our peculiarity. Every great civilization tried to devise a scheme by which ailments could be controlled and prevented. We also had that. In the ancient days, our systems of medicine and surgery were not deficient. The other day I was reading a book, *The Story of Medicine*, and the author, Dr. Kenneth Walker, makes out that it is wonderful to know how so many different surgical operations were devised by the ancient Indians including what is now called Rhinoplasty. They used to take a flap of the forehead and stick it to the nose to correct its deficiencies. That kind of plastic surgery was employed in our country in the ancient days. Many things were devised; many surgical operations performed. But, unfortunately, as in many other spheres of our activity, our development got arrested. It came to a stand-still. People who were practising these things were content with merely repeating what had been handed down to them, but were not making any progress, with the result, Āyurveda fell on evil days.

There is a story which comes down to us from ancient mythology. Usas, Eos, as the Greeks called her, fell in love with a mortal. Then she went up to

the gods and said: 'Pray, confer immortality on my lover.' They said. 'Yes.' Later on, the man grew old, grew senile, decayed and asked for death. Then Eos said: 'I forgot one thing; when I asked the gods to confer on you immortality, I forgot to ask them for the condition of immortality, namely, perpetual youth.' We can be immortal only if we are perpetually young. Because Eos did not ask for perpetual youth, her lover became decrepit, old and longed to die. So if a system has to endure, it must be perpetually young and ready to change. In other words, it must be capable of accepting new ideas, have the resilience of mind which the young have, have the openness, flexibility and spirit of adventure by which they accept what is given to them and transform it out of recognition.

We have a saying that *aṇḍa* and *brahmāṇḍa*, the microcosm and the macrocosm are akin to each other as above, so below. If the world consists of the different layers of materiality, minerals, metals etc; vitality, plants; mentality, animals; intellectuality, human beings; and spirituality, Godmen: these five ingredients of matter, life, consciousness, intellectuality enter into the nature of man. Man is a replica of these five layers of *anna*, *prāṇa*, *manes*, *vijñāna*, and *ānanda*. In other words, the human individual is not to be regarded as merely a physical body. A doctor who knows his profession treats not the disease but the patient. He knows not merely the science of medicine and surgery but the art of influencing the psychology of the patient. He must bring to bear not only the recuperative powers of the body, but the resilience of the mind and the faith of spirit. We

live in an age of great hurry and great speed. Men have lost their inward resources. They merely reflect, like a set of mirrors, opinions which they get from the outside. When they get a little leisure, they turn to material diversions from outside rather than to inward resources. In other words, this internal vacuum is responsible for mental and nervous troubles. The cure for this is not so much treatment by medicine and surgery but a recovery of faith in the ultimate goodness, truth, and decency of things. If we are able to recover that faith, if we are able to live in this world with our consciousness centred in the ultimacy of spirit, many of the problems to which we are subject today may be got over. Our people were regarded as aspiring after metaphysical insight and religious bliss, but we seem to forget that it never occurred to them to equate eternal life with either the surrender of the mind or the sacrifice of the body. When the Upanisad writer was asked to define what is meant by spiritual life or life eternal, he gave the answer, that it consists of the play of the vital organism, the satisfaction of mind, the abundance of tranquillity of spirit. Body, mind and spirit must be integrated and they must lead to a harmonious, developed life. If we get that, we have life eternal. That is the definition which was given to us centuries ago by the writers of Upaniṣads, and it is that definition we have to bring back, so far as our present practice is concerned.